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THESIS

**DEVELOPMENT OF CASE STUDIES FOR THE NAVAL
ACADEMY NE 203 ETHICS AND MORAL REASONING
FOR NAVAL LEADERS COURSE**

by

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June 2022

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This thesis reviews the structure and teaching methods used in the United States Naval Academy's NE 203 Ethics and Moral Reasoning for Naval Leaders course. We begin with a broad overview of the utility and effectiveness of the case method as a means of instructing undergraduate students in the field of ethics. We then focus on its current implementation in the Naval Academy's NE 203 course, using interviews with senior faculty to understand the importance of the case method in teaching practical ethics. The culminating products created within this thesis are two ethical case studies, with associated teaching plans, designed for instruction by Naval Academy faculty in the NE 203 ethics course. The first case study narrates the story of Michael Izbicki, a 2008 Naval Academy graduate and designated submarine officer who petitioned for discharge as a conscientious objector upon considering the possibility that his military duty may include launching nuclear-armed weapons against American adversaries. The case study examines the moral tension that one experiences when facing a contradiction between the special obligation incurred by taking the military Oath of Office, and one's deeply held religious views. The second case study is on when USS *Mason* was attacked in 2016.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAPT	captain
CDCM	costal defense cruise missiles
CDR	commander
CIC	combat information center
CIWS	close-in weapon system
CSC	combat systems coordinator
DDG	guided-missile destroyer
EMC	electrician mate chief petty officer
ENS	ensign
HSV	high speed vessel
LPD	amphibious transport dock
LT	lieutenant
OOD	officer of the deck
SPRINT	special psychiatric rapid intervention team
TAO	tactical action officer
UAE	United Arab Emirates

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I. INTRODUCTION

In any occupation experience is an invaluable asset. While the process of gaining experience through trial and error is typically used, some occupations do not have the luxury to use this method. The United States military is among those that must find other means of providing practical experience to its service members. While the military often defers to a strict training regimen to gain experience, another means is through reviewing case studies. Case studies have a unique ability to go beyond the rehearsed movements that training provides and shed light on the emotions and feelings that may be introduced during a unique situation.

At the United States Naval Academy midshipmen are commissioned into the United States Navy and Marine Corps at the end of a four year course of study. As part of their experience all midshipmen are enrolled into leadership and ethics courses. These courses have implemented the use of case studies in their curriculum to allow midshipmen to comprehend the basics of leadership, making ethical decisions and realizing the significance of being a member of the United States military.

Our aim is to create two case studies that can be used in the United States Naval Academy's ethics course to develop midshipmen morally. This process will involve initial steps to determine how to make a case study and where cases studies are needed in the current Naval Academy ethics course to fill gaps or expand upon the current curriculum. Ultimately, the goal is to create two unique case studies and lesson plans that can be used in the curriculum at the United States Naval Academy.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. THE CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: 1) to provide a review of pertinent literature delineating the effectiveness of the case method in undergraduate studies, 2) to provide an overview of the NE 203 Ethics course taught to all 2nd-year students at the United States Naval Academy, and 3) To demonstrate how the case method forms an effective part of the pedagogy of ethics in the NE 203 course.

2. History of the Case Study Method at Harvard Business School

To gain a general understanding of the academic utility of the case method in the classroom, we read *Teaching and the Case Method* by Louis B. Barnes et al. This text reviews the implementation of case studies as a method of instruction at Harvard Business School at the beginning of the twentieth century (Barnes et al., 1994, p. 38). The school's first Dean, Edwin Gay, sought to create a curriculum and teaching method that would "give each individual student a practical and professional training suitable to the particular business he plans to enter" (p. 40). Departing from traditional academic means, the faculty at Harvard Business School looked to the teaching of case studies to exercise their students' ability to act in the face of the novel, uncertain, and ever-changing environments of the business world (p. 41). According to Harvard University President A. Lawrence Lowell, through the case method, students develop their ability to rapidly analyze and synthesize information in order to solve problems (p. 41). Moreover, Barnes et al. state that students of the case method do not simply learn concepts, but rather they develop an individualized framework through which they apply concepts to understand and solve complex business problems (p. 42).

Next, Barnes et al. discuss the evolution of the case method within Harvard Business School. They note that the school initially had businessmen come into the classroom to discuss case studies that they had written from their own experiences. Later, the school began sending recent MBA graduates into the field to prepare case studies (p.

42). The text illustrates two such case studies, The Badger Manufacturing Company case and the Ajax Manufacturing Company case; these relatively short case studies are included in the text. Harvard's case studies evolved, encompassing a larger time span of a company's operations and including the perspectives of multiple management levels within the same company. As an example, a 15-case series on Nike illustrates its growth from a small company to a global corporation (p. 44).

3. Definition of a Case Study

In discussing various iterations of the definition of a case study, Barnes lands on the following:

A case is a partial, historical, clinical study of a situation which has confronted a practicing administrator or managerial group. Presented in narrative form to encourage student involvement, it provides data—narrative -substantive and process—essential to an analysis of a specific situation, for the framing of alternative action programs, and for their implementation recognizing the complexity and ambiguity of the practical world” (p. 44).

In utilizing this definition, Barnes et al. accept the limitations that it highlights—that case studies are “partial in coverage, and historical distortion is a probability” (p. 44). They acknowledge that the form which case studies take are dynamic over time, and that their iterations will increase in sophistication over time to fit the needs of the classroom of the present day (p. 44).

4. Fundamental Principles of Case Studies

Literature on the case method identifies several principles that are fundamental to case method teaching. Barnes et al. identify the following five:

1. The primacy of situational analysis: Essentially, the student must contend with the specified details of the scenario, to include its lack of information, conflicting party objectives, and imbalance of needs and resources. This principle emphasizes to the student that there is hardly ever a one-size-fits-all solution that can apply to a specific scenario (p. 47).

2. The imperative of relating analysis and action: Applying knowledge to a case is insufficient; the student must subsequently act. The resulting learning outcome is an understanding of the best course of action, and an idea of how to implement it within the scenario. Students must take the first step in solving the problem, as they cannot wait for the perfect solution which will never arrive (p. 48).
3. The necessity of student involvement: Case studies engage students inwardly—tapping their intellect and emotions—and outwardly—through their engagement in class discussions and debate with their cohort. They allow students to practice how they would act in reality, within the low-stakes environment of the classroom (p. 48).
4. A nontraditional instructor role: In teaching the case method, instructors serve as facilitators of interactive and experiential learning, rather than as subject matter experts transmitting information to their students. They posit questions that provoke discussion, ensure that group learning moves at a pace appropriate for all students, and help synergize students' individual contributions into a holistic class narrative, all while ensuring that their own take on the subject does not unduly sway the direction of the discussion toward some preconceived outcome. Importantly, skills of observation, listening, communication, and decision making are important for the case method instructor to embody (p. 49).
5. The requirement to implement a pragmatic point of view: Through the case method, students become knowledgeable about how to act in a practical sense. The scientific process of gaining verifiable knowledge of theories and concepts gives way to the ability of one to find oneself in an unfamiliar situation and to know how to act pragmatically (p. 49).

In *What Makes a Good Case?* Robyn identifies five criteria to distinguish what makes for a case worthy of use in the classroom:

1. Pedagogic Utility: According to Robyn, each case should be built around an underlying theory (p. 293). She asks, “What pedagogic issues will the case raise? And are those issues that can’t be raised equally well or better by an existing case?” (p. 292). She then makes the corollary that each case should be implemented as a component of a larger course module (p. 293).
2. Conflict-provoking: Robyn writes, “Controversy is the essence of a good case discussion: It engages students; it forces them to think through and defend their position; and it demonstrates to them that while there are generally no right answers, there are certain questions that it’s essential to ask” (p. 293). To determine whether a case has an adequate amount of conflict to be of academic value, Robyn encourages the question, “Is this an issue about which reasonable people could disagree?” (p. 293).
3. Decision-forcing: Robyn states that the most effective cases are those that remain unresolved, as it forces students to make a decision about what they would do, rather than having them simply observe what the case’s protagonist did (p. 294). She suggests that cases covering retrospective events can be made more impactful by dividing the story into two parts—one occurring before the case’s necessary decision point, and an epilogue case that describes the decision that the historical protagonist actually made, along with its subsequent results (p. 294).
4. Generality: Robyn states that the principles learned from a specific case must be generally applicable to other similar situations (p. 295). A case that is too unique in nature has lessened pedagogic value (p. 295).
5. Brevity: Robyn warns against bogging down a case with an excess of idiosyncratic information, lest the reader become distracted and disinterested (p. 295). She suggests that cases should have just enough narrative to allow students to gain an understanding of the specific situation being described, as well as its historical, political, or organizational context, if necessary (p. 295). She highlights, though, that

there is academic value in forcing students to sift through longer cases to distinguish between relevant and superfluous information (p. 295).

5. The Role of the Instructor in the Case Method

Teaching of the case method requires the instructor to fill a role that is different from traditional lecture-style teaching. Kenneth Winston, in *Teaching Ethics by the Case Method*, suggests that teacher and student become joint explorers of ethical territory that, as a result of individual life circumstances, may be as familiar to the student as to the instructor. He states, “In case discussion, therefore, the role of the teacher is not that of expert or source of knowledge; it is that of facilitator and intellectual foil, assisting students in their collaborative deliberations and attempting to nurture in them the ability to handle ethical conflict effectively on their own, when the instructor is not around to monitor the conversation” (p. 159). He further states that the primary role of the teacher is to ask questions that “...introduce students to a certain path of inquiry, that keep the exploration moving in a productive direction, that press students to investigate areas not yet proved sufficiently, and so on” (p. 159). Barnes et al. seem to agree with the sentiment, suggesting that case method instructors become learners themselves in the classroom, as they encounter novel ideas and questions posed by their students with each new occasion of teaching the same case to a different cohort of students (Barnes et al., 1994, p. 42).

6. The Effectiveness of the Case Method

Barnes et al. discuss how to evaluate whether the case method is an effective teaching format. They first note that it is difficult to make such an evaluation, as a student’s performance in the classroom is not necessarily indicative of success in the practicing world (p. 52). Despite this, Barnes et al. identify a number of characteristics that indicate a successful case discussion class:

1. The section functions as a learning group: How productive the case discussions are depends on to what extent a section has transitioned from a collection of individual students into a cohesive learning group. High levels of direct student-to-student engagement were indicative of success (p. 52).

2. High levels of student involvement: the more a student projects himself or herself into the roles of the individuals portrayed in a particular case study, the greater amount of ownership the student takes over the resulting learning outcomes from the course period (p. 53).
3. The instructor directs, rather than dominates, the discussion: An instructor who creates a class climate in which students may freely and collaboratively explore a case through their discussion is more effective than one who implements a rigid teaching plan that eventually leads students to a singular right answer (p. 53).

Additionally, Barnes et al. include various quotes from students that indicate qualitatively the learning processes and skills that they picked up from participating in a successful case discussion class. A summary of these key takeaways include: Uncovering blind spots in how students interact with certain situations or individuals (p. 54), discovering that there is often no single-track way to solve a problem (p. 54), patience and resilience in the face of intellectual uncertainty (p. 54), learning how to defend a position, and how to strengthen it in the face of viable critique (p. 54), and understanding how to persuade other students to buy-in to one's ideas (p. 54).

B. NE 203 OVERVIEW

1. Background of Course

The NE 203: Ethics & Moral Reasoning for Naval Leaders course is a foundational course taught during a midshipman's sophomore year at the United States Naval Academy (USNA). "The purpose of NE 203 is to prepare you to fulfill the special moral obligations inherent in your commission and your oath of office." (Appendix A). This overview will be inclusive of course history, how the course is taught, and a description of the course's four main themes - moral perception, moral deliberation, moral excellence and just war tradition.

In the late 1990s, 1994 Congress passed the 1994 Congressional National Defense Authorization Act that mandated service academies teach an ethics course (Appendix H). This initiative was fueled by a series of cheating scandals that tarnished the reputation of

the service academies to include the Naval Academy's 1996 Electrical Engineering cheating scandal that resulted in many midshipmen being expelled (Appendix H). Since that point, the course has gone through many revisions to fit the needs of the midshipmen and their development as future officers in the Navy and Marine Corps. In 2016, an external review committee came to the Naval Academy and was asked to review the NE 203 ethics course (Sears & Eberle, 5:40). The main recommendation to come out of the review was to spend a lot less time on dissecting ancient texts of philosophy and more time on material that is personally engaging to the midshipmen (Sears & Eberle, 7:13). This course should not be for midshipmen to become philosophers, but to go through a process of moral formation in which midshipmen can start to build a positive moral foundation (Sears & Eberle, 10:35).

The NE 203 course is taught by civilian and military instructors over a 16-week period. On the first meeting of the week multiple sections, or classes, of midshipmen meet with a philosophy professor or theologian who will articulate a lecture on a piece of literature (e.g., Aristotle, Plato) to comprehend knowledge that serves as the foundation for later discussions (Appendix A). Then midshipmen break into smaller sections led by senior military members that have extensive experience in the Navy or Marine Corps to apply the moral concepts that were taught during their philosophy lecture (Appendix A). Due to being at war for the past twenty years, many of the senior military instructors have personal experiences or know of case studies that make these topics relatable and engaging for the midshipmen (Sears & Eberle, 4:00). Over the 16-week course the use of case studies is what really makes the curriculum relevant to the midshipmen (Appendix I).

The outcomes of the review in 2016 support a point that midshipmen are more likely to retain information from case studies taught by senior military advisors. The Naval Academy's goal is to develop midshipmen that will retain information from their ethics course after they commission, the best medium is through discussion with senior military advisors in the form of case studies. If the midshipmen are engaged during class time, they will likely remain engaged in similar discussions throughout the remainder of their time at the Naval Academy. The midshipmen's sustained focus on ethics throughout the rest of their time at the Naval academy will strengthen their moral compass and enforce the

mission at the Naval Academy, to ensure midshipmen are morally sound by the time they commission as officers.

There are two key takeaways from this section - understanding the course is divided into four different sections and that the course is team-taught. When creating a case study, there must be a clear direction on which of the four sections the case study plans to support for the academic use of midshipmen. Additionally, due to the team instructor dynamic, a case study should be paired with corresponding ethical literature. This allows for midshipmen to frame each case within the ethical context to which it pertains. They are then permitted the opportunity to discuss with the theologian the broader ethical concepts related to a specific case, and to discuss with the senior military instructor the manner in which they should apply their own ethical decision making within the case narrative.

2. Moral Perception

The first topic introduced in the course is moral perception. Moral perception can be understood as different people see the world in very different ways (Sears & Hedahl, No. 2, 0:44). While each individual is comprehending the same thing or situation, what they are aware of and not aware of is important to the individual (Sears & Hedahl, No. 2 0:50). The NE203 ethics course teaches midshipmen they are responsible for what they are and are not aware of, in order to develop a good sense of moral perception (Sears & Hedahl, No. 2, 6:33). This block of the NE 203 ethics course allows midshipmen to identify what is right and wrong, ultimately building their moral perception (McFarlin, R., Senior NE 203 Instructor, October 29, 2021).

The course starts with moral perception because if one cannot see where a moral dilemma would exist, then one cannot begin to deliberate on the moral arguments (Hedahl 4:10). During this section of the course case studies such as “Afghan Sexual Abuse Case” and “Abu Ghraib” are reviewed by the midshipmen. These case studies expose when the military has been wrong in the past and allows midshipmen the opportunity to discuss how these “wrong” choices came to be made. This concept reinforces to the midshipmen that one needs to be aware of their choices, critically think, and that every choice they make influences their moral formation (Sears & Hedahl, No. 2, 10:30).

There are three main learning objectives in the moral perception block (Appendix B):

1. Analyze the importance of moral perception to ethical behavior.
2. Evaluate the way culture, subcultures, and social factors can influence moral perception, moral deliberation, and moral excellence.
3. Explain how moral actions can still be said to be categorically wrong or right despite the way culture and subcultures shape moral perception.

Developing moral perception does not happen naturally. As the Naval Academy is a melting pot of diversity, there are many different perspectives. This moral perception section needs to standardize the moral view of midshipmen on determining right and wrong. At this point in the course, midshipmen need to start to see there are issues with some rules and regulations. Thus, they cannot blindly follow the rules and regulations but need assurance they are carrying out a morally just duty.

The goal of this section is to make the midshipmen see there are moral issues. This is critical because oftentimes, one jumps to conclusions that individuals clearly see the issue and jump to the moral deliberation. This section focuses on making sure the initial right and wrong are understood and leaves the “why” to be determined in a later section.

3. Moral Deliberation

The second topic introduced in the course is moral deliberation. Moral deliberation is the framework for how you make moral decisions (Sears & Hedahl, No. 3, 1:01). In the NE 203 course, one key difference that is explained is between a test of integrity and a moral dilemma. On one hand, a test of integrity is knowing what the right decision is and having the courage to make it (Sears & Hedahl, No. 3, 1:11). Whereas a moral dilemma is when one must choose what is the “right” decision when faced with moral ambiguity (Sears & Hedahl, No.3, 1:30).

At a traditional university moral deliberation is taught through three ethical frameworks - virtue, consequentialism, and deontology (Sears & Hedahl, No. 3, 2:15). A student would learn each of these frameworks through the use of literature and class

discussions (Sears & Hedahl, No. 3, 3:10). At that point, the student would then defend an argument based on one of the ethical frameworks (Sears & Hedahl, No. 3, 3:16). This argument would justify their version of moral deliberation (Sears & Hedahl, No. 3, 3:29). However, in reality, decisions cannot be justified by just one ethical framework, and all of the frameworks should be blended to make a decision (Sears & Hedahl, No. 3, 5:22). The NE 203 ethics course takes a practical stance at teaching midshipmen how to blend each framework to make a “right” decision.

In the NE 203 course the moral deliberation road map (MDR) has been created as a tool to assist midshipmen in making a moral decision. The MDR is a systematic process that considers constraints, consequences, special obligations, and character when making a moral decision (Sears & Hedahl, No. 3, 6:15). One instructor stated, he is a fan of the MDR because midshipmen come from all different backgrounds and while they may think they are “right,” they have never had a structured framework to develop and analyze their decision (Appendix L). Shown in Figure 1 is a diagram of the MDR used at the United States Naval Academy.



Figure 1. Moral Deliberation Roadmap used in NE 203 course

There are five main learning objectives in the moral deliberation block (Appendix C):

1. Apply the four moral factors (constraints, consequences, character, and special obligations) and apply the first three moral factors in ethical deliberation.
2. Evaluate the role of human dignity and autonomy in ethics.
3. Analyze the long-term and short-term consequences of moral choices and evaluate the impact such consequences ought to have on moral deliberation in general, and in military leadership, in particular.
4. Evaluate the appropriate relationship between constraints and consequences in general and in a military context.
5. Evaluate the role special obligations ought to play in moral deliberation and analyze the significance of special obligations have for military leadership.

As a comparison between the traditional teaching method and the Naval Academy perspective, there is a clear difference between what the students are learning. The traditional student is learning the history of ethics from multiple frameworks and how to use each as an argumentative stance to defend their decision. While midshipmen at the Naval Academy are learning a practical approach to comprehend a moral dilemma and be able to make a decision based on blending multiple frameworks. This approach is uniquely geared towards being a tool that can be used while serving as a military officer.

The section on moral deliberation reinforces the focus of this course. This course intends to create better people and allow midshipmen to thrive upon their transition to being officers. When creating a teacher's guide for a case study, one should create a perspective from multiple ethical frameworks and utilize the MDR to facilitate a standard structure throughout the NE 203 course.

4. Moral Excellence

The third topic introduced in the course is moral excellence. The moral excellence block is important because midshipmen graduate and are immediately commissioned as trusted officers. The goal of the character block is to help midshipmen grow and self-diagnose their character (Sears & Good, 1:25). Midshipmen are exposed to different virtues and have several opportunities to reflect to develop and better understand their character.

The NE 203 ethics course focuses on four main virtues—self-confidence, temperance, courage, and resiliency. The discussion on self-confidence discusses differing views on pride from Aristotle and C.S. Lewis to allow midshipmen to gain perspective and a better understanding on the pros and cons of how pride can be viewed (Sears & Good, 17:25). Temperance is important to midshipmen because it is required as an officer in the Navy or Marine Corps and teaches them how to control their emotions (Sears & Good, 24:07). During the section on courage, midshipmen are asked to read a medal of honor citation and think about all of the choices one had to make to build their courage prior to the point of the citation. (Sears & Good, 30:25). Lastly, resilience addresses how one comes back from moral error and how it can be used as a means of reacting to moral injury (Sears & Good, 33: 09).

During the character section, the midshipmen are given many opportunities for self-reflection to think about their character and current moral formation. There are six different reflection drills outlined in the Pilot Instructor Guide. For example, one drill requests midshipmen to place themselves in a distraction free environment for a stated amount of time. The idea is for the midshipmen to disengage and discover real feelings that have been impressed by the external social environment and come away with a greater self-knowledge (Appendix D). The use of reflection papers and drills has allowed midshipmen to understand the importance of reflection on developing and assessing their character.

There are six main learning objectives in the moral excellence block (Appendix E):

1. Evaluate how character is formed through habituation and moral choice.
2. Evaluate the connections between virtues, moral perceptions, choices, and emotions.

3. Evaluate which character traits are needed for the development of military officers.
4. Evaluate the influence of character on military leadership.
5. Evaluate the role that the limits of morality may play in morality.
6. Evaluate the ethical significance of military customs, courtesies and rituals.

This section focuses on building character as a muscle, as well as allowing the midshipmen to be reflective. Both of these goals are common in the fact they happen in and more importantly outside the classroom. In the creation of a case study, there should be a one-page guide. This guide would be useful as a tool for midshipmen to use during training, or meal times that are spent with other midshipmen. This concept embraces and reinforces that midshipmen need to create a culture at the Naval Academy that helps one another flex and condition their character.

The restructured NE 203 ethics course has put emphasis on four virtues and is a highly reflective course. Knowing that self-confidence, temperance, courage, and resilience are foundational virtues for the character section allows individuals writing cases to narrow in a material and factors that would be aligned with the course syllabus. Additionally, the reflective nature of the course poses an opportunity for a reflection period or prompt to be incorporated with a prepared case study.

5. Just War Tradition

The fourth topic introduced in the course is just war tradition. There are three perspectives when viewing if war is morally permissible - Pacifism, Realism, and Just War Theory. The pacifist perspective states war is never morally permissible (Appendix F). The second response, realist tradition, suggests war is amoral and that it exists outside the war of morality (Appendix F). The last response is just war theory, which is taught at the Naval Academy. Just war theory stakes out a moral middle ground between the pacifist and realist perspectives (Appendix F). Just War Theory is broken into *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*

(Appendix F). The NE 203 course uses Just War Theory and introduces the fundamental concepts of when and why war is morally permissible to future officers.

Jus ad bellum translates as justice to war and tries to answer when a state should go to war (Appendix F). In the 13th century Thomas Aquinas set three parameters for *jus ad bellum* (Appendix F). The three parameters state that war must be fought by and for a “legitimate authority, just cause, and right intent” (Appendix F). Three more criteria have been added to *jus ad bellum* convention to include war must be a last resort, a state must have a reasonable hope of success and proportionality of ends (Appendix F). These concepts are factored by heads of state when deciding to go to war, however midshipmen study these factors to be able to articulate to their troops why we are at war (Sears & Herbert, 12:45).

Jus in bello deals with the conduct of war (Appendix F). Simply put, what separates a warrior from a murder (Sears & Herbert, 15:00). The *jus in bello* is separated into three key concepts—discrimination, proportionality, and double effect (Appendix F). Discrimination separates combatants from noncombatants and how each should be treated during war (Appendix F). Proportionality assures no act of war should cause harm disproportionate to the ends we hope to achieve (Appendix F). Embedded in proportionality, is necessity which demands any death or destruction on the battlefield is used as a means to achieve our military ends (Appendix F). While proportionality may seem to increase risks to the troops, it is important midshipmen understand two key takeaways from this concept (Sears & Herbert, 18:27). The purpose of fighting a war is to reestablish justice, hard to establish justice when not using just means to get to the end, and the duty an officer has to bring their troops back as physically and morally whole human beings to prevent moral injury (Sears & Herbert, 18:58). The double-effect theory is also discussed in the moral deliberation block, but once again brought into discussion for concepts such as, is it moral to kill a severely wounded enemy combatant? (Appendix F).

There are five main learning objectives in the just war tradition block (Appendix G):

1. Distinguish between *Jus ad Bellum* and *Jus in Bello*.

2. Apply the *Jus ad Bellum* criteria to determine the justice of specific conflicts: modern, historic, and potential (to include humanitarian interventions).
3. Evaluate the relationship between virtue and justice in war.
4. Apply the *jus in bello* principles to actions within war.
5. Evaluate the role of *jus in bello* principles to analyze the ethics of modern military actions.

While making the decision to go to war is incredibly complex, midshipmen need to understand the basics of the just war theory, as future naval officers. Presenting the Just War Theory in a simple manner means it will be easy for the midshipmen to maintain and discuss. As naval and marine officer, midshipmen will have the responsibility of articulating the “why” behind going to war to their troops. If the “why” is presented correctly the buy-in to fight a war using just means will be better accepted by the troops and sailors.

6. Conclusion

After observation of several NE 203 courses it was evident this course is largely taught in a Socratic method to engage midshipmen. The development of more case studies would be largely beneficial as a tool to help teach one of the four themes instructed during the 16-week course. A more in-depth comprehension of the course has led to a better understanding of why case studies are needed for midshipmen development in the course. It has allowed us to identify concepts that must be taken into consideration when designing case studies.

C. ETHICAL CASE STUDIES IN NE 203

We conducted interviews with five senior instructors of the Naval Academy’s NE 203 course to determine how case studies are currently implemented in the course, what makes for an effective NE 203 case study, and where new case studies could be developed to enhance the curriculum. The interviewees’ responses informed the types of cases that we searched for, as well as how we constructed our cases.

1. Case Study Implementation In NE 203

Ethical case studies are widely used in the NE 203 course as a method for teaching midshipmen about ethical concepts. They serve as the bridge between the principles of moral philosophy that instructors teach in the course, and the practical situations that a midshipman may encounter in his or her military experience after commissioning (Appendix H). Typically, the cases used in the course deal with situations with high-stakes consequences, including endangering the lives and well-being of other service members, or of civilians. One such case example is titled *The Boat People*, in which the captain of a Navy warship transiting through the South China Sea encounters a broken-down vessel packed with refugees, and must determine whether and how to deliver aid (Lucas & Rubel, 2011, pp. 13–15). By contextualizing the moral principles taught in NE 203 through these realistic military scenarios, midshipmen are able to grasp them more clearly than if they were to study them from a purely philosophical perspective (Appendix I). The case studies make the moral principles relevant to the midshipmen, who develop their own courses of action for how they would handle a given scenario. One instructor described midshipmen working through these case studies as a visceral experience, because they allowed midshipmen to feel, rather than to simply know about, the moral dilemmas that they may face in the fleet (Appendix J).

The case studies presented in NE 203 create a learning situation in which midshipmen challenge their ethical assumptions and test their personal ethical framework. Many may enter the course believing that they already carry an adequate sense of ethics. The case studies challenge this belief by requiring midshipmen to develop a moral stance founded on morally sound justifications, and then to defend that stance in front of their instructor and peers (Appendix H, Appendix J). For some midshipmen, the NE 203 course is the first time in their lives that they have had to construct a moral position that must withstand the scrutiny of others. Consequently, midshipmen develop the practice of challenging their own assumptions to ensure that they are based on sound moral principles. According to one senior instructor, “the two best comments for a midshipman to make are, ‘I haven’t thought about that idea before,’ because it indicates that the midshipmen is engaged in learning, and ‘Sir/Ma’am, can I change my answer?’ indicating that the

midshipmen are listening to and considering alternate courses of action posed by their classmates” (Appendix H). Ultimately, midshipmen leave the course with a deeper understanding of their individual moral values that they rely on in the future to make moral decisions (Appendix H).

NE 203 case studies require midshipmen to actively engage in a scenario by determining how they would respond. By formulating their individual moral or ethical decision within the context of the scenario, they actively engage in their own moral development. Future Navy and Marine Corps officers must learn to act within the fog of uncertainty, rapidly process significant amounts of disparate information, and develop their own framework for working through the rigors of a moral or ethical dilemma in order to decide *and act* upon a morally cogent solution. When applied to the NE 203 course, the case method allows midshipmen to exercise their moral judgment in a low-stakes environment, affording the opportunity to practice in theory how they would perform in reality. One senior instructor noted that it is common for midshipmen to feel a sense of angst or frustration about the cases that they study, as the decisions that they are forced to make are not easy (Appendix H). Additionally, instructors typically do not share their opinions or solutions with students, in order to force the midshipmen to come up with their own solution without relying on an instructor’s answer (Appendix H). By working through these emotionally fraught scenarios in the classroom, students gain a sense of how it will feel for them to face similarly daunting moral dilemmas in the operating forces, where their decisions will have real consequences.

Currently, the NE 203 course utilizes a number of cases involving combat arms scenarios, both from the Marine Corps Infantry and the Navy Special Warfare communities (Appendix H, Appendix J).

2. What Makes For An Effective Case Study

There are a number of factors that senior NE 203 instructors identified that a case study must have in order to be effective. First, the most effective NE 203 case studies are those that require a midshipman to make a decision. According to one senior instructor, case studies with no easy answer force midshipmen to think hard about the decisions that

they make (Appendix K). Midshipmen should be placed in scenarios where they get in the practice of developing their own morally sound solution using their individual ethical framework.

Cases should be written using narrative perspectives that allow the midshipmen to easily see themselves within the scenarios. One senior instructor noted that plausible cases should be constructed in which a midshipman can naturally assume the role of the protagonist. Another noted that cases should not feel contrived, but should rather be realistic enough to be believable (Appendix J). In this sense, cases with narratives centered around the experience of a junior officer effectively meet this need (Appendix J). In some instances, implementing a case that is conducive to role play in the classroom allows midshipmen to better experience the weight of the decisions that they have made. Holding a mock Captain's Mast in class is an example that has proven effective (Appendix L).

Cases with realistic consequences give midshipmen perspective on the gravity of the moral or ethical situations that they may face in the operating forces. In an example case, junior SH-60 helicopter pilots must decide whether or not to put their lives at risk to launch an effort to rescue their friends, whose helicopter was suddenly lost at sea during stormy weather (Appendix K). Another generalized example revolves around how a Marine platoon commander should act to ensure that his or her subordinates do not suffer moral injury from killing in combat (Appendix J). Such cases are based on real scenarios that military officers had to face in the fleet—indicating the real possibility that the midshipmen in the NE 203 course could face similarly weighty decisions.

The NE 203 course incorporates some scenarios whose realistic consequences fall below the threshold of life-and-death. It is important to demonstrate to midshipmen that moral decision making is not exclusive to the heat of combat. Rather, moral decisions occur both in war and peace. They occur in combat, training environments, garrison environments, and during liberty periods. One senior instructor noted, "Case studies should not always be as high-stakes as life or death, because if that's all the midshipmen see, then they will start to think that unless they are in combat or in a real dangerous situation, then [they] don't have to make ethical and moral decisions" (Appendix K).

Finally, NE 203 cases should not have clear answers. Morally ambiguous cases that do not have a clear answer lend themselves to more robust discussions in class (Appendix K). Through this discussion, midshipmen learn that facing moral dilemmas involves complexity and uncertainty, which they must overcome in order to make a morally sound decision.

3. What Case Studies Could Be Added to Enhance the Curriculum

During interviews with senior NE 203 instructors, we asked them which topics in the curriculum could benefit from the introduction of new case studies. This line of questioning revealed a number of areas where new case studies were warranted.

Several instructors identified that NE 203 lacked case studies involving a struggle between a service member's obligation to the Constitutional paradigm, incurred by taking the Oath of Office, and other obligations of moral significance, such as duty to one's family or to deeply held religious beliefs (Appendix I, Appendix J). One instructor noted that "talking about religion allows for the devout to see where there could be hard conflicts between what they believe and what they may be ordered to do as junior officers (Appendix H). Another mentioned Divine Command Theory as a concept whose juxtaposition with the Constitutional Paradigm could be best exemplified through a case study (Appendix I).

Other instructors identified that more case studies related to the concept of moral courage were needed, particularly regarding scenarios where it is required in lower stakes decisions made external of combat (Appendix K). Additionally, instructors lacked cases related to diversity and inclusion, particularly relating to LGBTQ+ service members (Appendix K).

One senior instructor stated that the bank of NE 203 case studies should be updated frequently, to ensure that midshipmen are studying scenarios that are relevant to the real situations that they are likely to encounter in the operating forces (Appendix K). For example, many of the cases in the NE 203 course revolve around the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Appendix K), with fewer related to the Western Pacific (Appendix I).

The information gathered from these interviews informs our approach to seeking out and constructing case studies for the NE 203 course. We will use it to ensure that the case studies we develop are pertinent to the course and temporally relevant in order to engage midshipmen with cases to which they can relate.

III. METHODOLOGY

The primary task of our thesis was to develop case studies that can be widely used in military ethics courses such as the NE 203 Ethics and Moral Reasoning for Naval Leaders at the Naval Academy. The most important factor was to make the midshipmen feel there were realistic consequences in the decisions they would be faced with in each case. Additionally, we sought to create cases in which there is no single right answer, and to find case studies pertaining to communities outside of ground combat. Thus, we chose to analyze and develop two case studies: One on ENS Michael Izbicki pertaining to conscientious objection and the ethics of nuclear warfare, and one on when USS *Mason* was attacked and the realities of being a member of the military.

A. ENS IZBICKI CASE STUDY

This section outlines the case abstract, initial case research plan, and initial interview plan that was implemented to develop the case study on ENS Michael Izbicki.

1. Case Abstract

Michael Izbicki was raised in a nondenominational Christian church in his home state of California (Vitello, 2011). As a successful high school student, Michael Izbicki decided to attend the United States Naval Academy in order to fulfill a personal obligation to serve his country during a time of war (Vitello, 2011). Izbicki was accepted to the Naval Academy, spent four rigorous years training for military service, and commissioned at the top of his class in 2008 as a designated submarine officer (Vitello, 2011). Upon graduation, he attended Johns Hopkins University, earning a master's degree in computer engineering, before moving to New London, Connecticut to begin his submarine officer training pipeline (Vitello, 2011). ENS Izbicki's training in Charleston, South Carolina included rigorous testing and examinations to ensure that submarine officers like him were well-qualified to fulfill their responsibilities in the operating forces, to include potentially launching ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads against the United States' adversaries (Vitello, 2011). In 2009, while undergoing an exam, he encountered a question that caused him to reconsider the trajectory of his career in naval service. It was at that

point that he realized he could no longer reconcile his potential military obligation of killing another human being with his religious views, which had developed significantly since taking his Oath of Office as an Academy midshipman (Vitello, 2011).

ENS Izbicki's answer to that exam question required that he be flagged for a psychological evaluation (Vitello, 2011). Subsequently, he spoke with a Navy chaplain, who suggested that he seek status as a conscientious objector, which would allow him to be discharged from the Navy (Vitello, 2011). After being denied conscientious objector status twice, ENS Izbicki entered a protracted legal battle, partnering with the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut to file a federal lawsuit (Vitello, 2011). In February 2011, Izbicki was granted a discharge (Vitello, 2011).

The case study on ENS Izbicki will seek to illuminate an example of the moral tension that may arise in a servicemember when a military duty—in this case, the duty to kill others through the launching of nuclear weapons—creates an internal struggle between two obligations—the Oath of Office that one takes upon entering military service, and one's deeply held religious views. It will also seek to explore the ethical complexity surrounding the U.S. military's use of nuclear weapons. The following questions will be explored:

2. Case Research Plan

Research in the form of interviews, a review of sources for contextual research, and a review of pertinent philosophical literature were conducted in order to build a cohesive narrative for this case study and an accompanying lesson plan.

3. Interview Plan

Because of the relative recency of this event, we expected that interviews with individuals involved would serve as the primary means of developing the case's context. The main person of interest was Dr. Michael Izbicki, the case's subject. We interviewed him in order to understand the firsthand experience of his upbringing, his decision to attend the Naval Academy and become a submarine officer, his experience at the Naval Academy, Johns Hopkins University, and submarine training in Charleston, South Carolina, his experience encountering the exam question that invoked his decision to end his military

service, and the administrative and legal challenge that he faced in seeking conscientious objector status. In addition to gathering factual and event-based information from him, we sought to learn of the evolution of his views on his faith, his military duty, and nuclear warfare, spanning from his childhood through the acceptance of his discharge and beyond. Appendix N offers a transcript of the interview with Dr. Izbicki.

Questions that we asked Dr. Izbicki are as follows:

1. Generally, what was your upbringing like?
2. According to the New York Times article covering your story as a conscientious objector, you grew up attending a nondenominational church in San Clemente, CA. How did your upbringing in church affect your decision to seek a commission into the Navy through the Academy?
3. What made you decide to attend the Naval Academy?
4. Your family seemed supportive of your choice to join the military. Did you ever perceive any concern or resistance from them about your choice?
5. In high school, did you have any discussions with faith leaders or role models about the morality of killing others as a potential duty of military service?
6. When did you decide to become a submarine officer? Did you make this decision?
7. How did you exercise your faith while you were at the Naval Academy and afterward?
8. What experiences at or after the Naval Academy had an effect on your faith?
9. Did you take an ethics course while at the Naval Academy? What do you remember about it? Did it discuss the Constitutional Paradigm? What was your perspective when encountering this concept? Was there any discussion during the course on the morality of killing in combat?

10. Did you have any doubts as a midshipman about your willingness to conduct your duties as a Navy officer upon graduating—to include potentially taking the lives of the United States' adversaries in combat?
11. What informed your decision to pursue a Master's Degree at Johns Hopkins University after graduating?
12. How did your time in graduate school at Johns Hopkins affect your views on faith, and/or your duties as a Navy officer?
13. At what point did you become aware that submarine officers were potentially responsible for launching ballistic nuclear missiles?
14. What caused you to reconsider your ability to carry out the duties of a submarine officer?
15. In your TED Talk video, you speak of a Navy Chaplain who encouraged you to read the Bible more. Who was it specifically, and at what command?
16. If you had been assigned to a different warfighting community from the Naval Academy (i.e. Surface Warfare Officer, Intelligence Officer), do you think you would have undergone the same process of discovery about your faith and your military duty?
17. What was the process like for you to apply for Conscientious Objector status?
18. What did you do after your time in the Navy?
19. According to The Day, you were required to compensate the military for the cost of your education. How much did this amount to?

4. Review of Contextual Sources

Beyond interviews, we reviewed pertinent sources to gain additional contextual research about Izbicki's narrative. These included a New York Times article and a TEDx talk which he delivered on 16 December, 2013 at the University of California, Riverside;

both of these sources outline Izbicki's story. Additionally, we reviewed the transcripts of his discharge hearings in order to understand more about his legal argument for discharge and conscientious objector status. Finally, we reviewed academic writings published by Dr. Izbicki, including *What's Wrong with America's Nuclear Hawks*, *The Steps to War: An Empirical Study (Book Review)*, and *The Human Faces of God: What Scripture Reveals When it Gets God Wrong*.

B. USS *MASON* CASE STUDY

This section outlines the case abstract and initial case research plan that was implemented to develop the case study on the USS *Mason*.

1. Case Abstract

On October 1, 2016, the Houthi rebels fired a C-802, Chinese-designed anti-ship missile, at the HSV-2 *Swift* (Shay, 2016). The HSV-2 *Swift* was owned by the United Arab Emirates and came under attack in the Bab al Mandab Strait (Shay, 2016). Due to the attack the United States dispatched the ships to the southern end of the Bab al-Mandab Strait (Shay, 2016). The vessels were dispatched to display a show of force and protect shipping, as the United States publicly condemned the attack by the Houthi rebels on the HSV-2 *Swift* (Shay, 2016).

While operating in the Bab al-Mandab the USS *Mason* came under fire from Houthi rebels on multiple occasions. During this timeframe there were no casualties to the ship or Sailors onboard USS *Mason*.

The attack on USS *Mason* could be analyzed in itself on a tactical level, however the attack merely sets the stage for the moral dilemma that will be examined. After being attacked, some Sailors questioned if a life of naval service was for them. This case study shows the reality of stressors on the warfighter and allows readers to gain a better understanding on what a life of military service entails.

2. Case Research Plan

The research for this case will be in the form of news articles, interviews, and philosophical literature. News articles will mainly be used for the background and lead into the case concerning the environment in theater and the attack on USS *Mason*. Interviews were used to gather information on the ship's culture, the crew's understanding of the threat environment, and significant events the day of the failed attack. Philosophical literature and course material were used to create, support, and build the learning objectives of the academic case.

Interviews were conducted virtually and in person. The following individuals were supportive in providing information to help create the case study:

1. Stephen Aldridge—Executive Officer
2. Jeff Swaim—Operations Officer / Tactical Action Officer
3. Daniel Holmes—Engineering Chief Petty Officer

The individuals listed have been gathered using the surface warfare officer network at the United States Naval Academy. There was an attempt to get an officer and enlisted perspective on the case. Additionally, as a result of these interviews, there was an attempt made to find literature to support creation of the case study. Below are the standard questions that will be asked during the interview process:

1. How long was USS *Mason* deployed before the failed attack on 9 October 2016?
2. How would you define the threat environment and ship culture prior to the attack on HSV-2 *Swift*?
3. After the attack on HSV-2 *Swift* did ship culture or perspective change?
4. What events in chronological order do you recall from 9 October 2016?
5. Were there concerns expressed from the crew after the failed attack?
6. Did any of the crew members leave the deployment early? If so, why did they leave early?

7. How did crew members leaving early impact the ship; conversely, if they had not left the ship, how would their presence have affected the ship?

Discuss summary of the thesis and intent of developing a case study.

8. What other information would be beneficial to developing a case study and allow the readers to feel they were present throughout the scenario?
9. Are there any official or unofficial lessons learned or documents that would be helpful to develop this case study?

Question nine, which refers to the creation of a lesson learned document was important to find if there was a detailed analysis of the case that had already been created. Usually, a lesson learned document would be generated after situations, such as the attack on USS *Mason*. However, research thus far has not uncovered any official Navy records regarding the event. The most detailed literature received was a speech that CDR Aldridge gave in regards to the attack on USS *Mason*. These specific details help bring the case to life and allow the midshipmen to place themselves in the situation.

As for philosophy literature, the intention was to gather information from the literature that is used in and outside of the course that covers how ethics applies to our commitment to the Constitution and literature on virtues. The following literature works were reviewed:

1. NE 203 Course Syllabus
2. NE 203 Learning Outcomes
3. NE 203 Pilot Guides
4. Constitutional Ethics
5. The Moral Virtues

While reviewing these works of literature, there was an emphasis on constitutional ethics, temperance, and moral courage. Understanding these concepts and how they relate to the NE 203 course at the USNA helped create a path for the proper case study development. This case has the possibility of covering all three topics mentioned above.

A literature review of the syllabus allows determination of the placement of the case study in the course curriculum due to course topics needing to be foreshadowed or reinforced depending on the case study placement. Additionally, the review of philosophical topics being learned by the midshipmen allowed me to incorporate common themes and design practical academic questions for discussion.

IV. ENS IZBICKI

A. CASE STUDY

Unless otherwise noted, all facts of this case study are sourced from an interview conducted with Dr. Michael Izbicki. See Appendix N for interview transcript.

1. Introduction

The chaplain looked pensively at the young Ensign sitting across from him. Pushing back from his office desk, he drew toward a filing cabinet, opened it, and began thumbing through some documents. “I think...” he said, as he pulled out a folder, “this might apply to you. Have you ever heard of the term, conscientious objection?”

The chaplain handed ENS Izbicki the folder. He began flipping through it as the chaplain explained to him what a conscientious objector is—an individual who refuses to participate in warfare due to deeply held moral or religious beliefs. In the five years since he began his military career at the U.S. Naval Academy, ENS Izbicki had never heard of such a concept. Yet as the chaplain explained more to him about conscientious objection, a lot of thoughts and doubts that he had been harboring about his chosen career path—what led him to this meeting with the chaplain—began to finally make sense.

“Why don’t you take the application home with you and look it over,” the chaplain offered. “Take some time and think about it.”

That night, as he returned to his barracks room, ENS Izbicki began to contemplate everything that had brought him to this point. He recalled the excitement that he had felt after being accepted into the Academy and starting his military journey after high school. The resolve he had had as a teenager to become the best naval officer that he could be. And the doubts, at first small, but then growing large enough to pervade his every thought—about whether or not he could actually fulfill his military obligation—to do what he signed up for—and still live at peace with himself. His path to become a submarine officer would put him in charge of a mini arsenal of nuclear weapons, whose blast pattern could decimate

entire cities. If, while underway, he were to receive the order to launch one...would he actually, in good conscience, be able to obey?

Sitting at his dining room table, ENS Izbicki flipped open the folder, pulled out the application, and began to write.

2. The Early Years

Like many Naval Academy midshipmen, Izbicki had wanted to join the military since he was little. Both of his grandfathers had served in World War II—one in the Army, one in the Navy—and he grew up in San Clemente, California, not far from the gates of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. In school, many of his classmates were the sons and daughters of active duty Marines. Sometimes his YMCA basketball coach, who was a Marine, would take his team to the shooting range on base after practice. Moreover, when Izbicki was six, the United States conducted Operation Desert Storm. He admired the might of his nation, and the courage and bravery shown by its troops—people like his own friends' parents! These experiences fueled Izbicki's desire to one day serve his country.

Izbicki grew up with a Catholic father and an Episcopalian mother, neither of whom imposed their own religious beliefs on their three children. The family attended church only once in a while. In high school, however, Izbicki began attending church on his own, getting involved with the youth group there. As he developed in his own Christian faith, he started making a habit out of reading the Bible and praying regularly. Not surprisingly, the church that Izbicki attended—Pacific Coast Church—had a significant number of churchgoers who were active service members or veterans.

During his sophomore year of high school, Izbicki watched with the rest of the nation as the twin towers fell on September 11th, 2001. Witnessing such a terrible attack against the United States emboldened his resolve to serve. He firmly believed that his nation was in need of his service, and he was ready to answer that call. He began contemplating his next steps after high school, and decided that, like many of his peers across the nation, the natural path for him would be to apply to the service academies as a means of commissioning. While Izbicki's mother and father had the typical reservations that parents hold about sending their child off to a career in the Navy, they professed

complete support of his future. And his church congregation encouraged his decision in the wake of 9/11, believing that military service to the country was a way of serving God and making a positive difference in the world.

As he considered applying to the Naval Academy, Izbicki sought the advice of his church pastor, who was a Marine veteran, on what challenges his future as a service member would hold. While he wholeheartedly supported Izbicki's choice to seek entrance into Annapolis, he warned that to pursue a career in the military would be a challenging path for him to walk as a Christian. The pastor warned of a culture in the military that was permissive of regular cursing and crude sexual humor—aspects of the military lifestyle that he expressed would be the most difficult for Izbicki to deal with as a Christian. Curiously, these were the lengths of the pastor's concerns for Izbicki's future; despite being a combat veteran, the pastor made no comment about the potential obligation that Izbicki could one day incur to take the life of another human being in battle. The possibility of killing could certainly pose severe challenges to the moral beliefs of Christians like Izbicki. But this was far from his mind as he geared up to apply for admission to Annapolis.

3. The Naval Academy - A Desire to Serve Honorably

In the fall of 2003, Izbicki received an appointment to join the Naval Academy Class of 2008. He was overwhelmingly excited for his future career of naval service. His experience entering the Naval Academy was fairly typical for a midshipman. Plebe summer was arduous, but he worked hard to memorize rates, square his corners, and keep his eyes in the boat. That summer Izbicki wrote to his mother, expressing confidence that the military was where he belonged and that his life was on the right path.

Izbicki welcomed newfound freedoms as Plebe Summer transitioned into the Academic Year. He joined 27th Company and settled on majoring in computer science. He started to develop his friend group, hanging out mainly with other Christian midshipmen. Surrounding himself with other Christians insulated him from less savory aspects of Brigade culture—the cursing and sexual humor that his pastor had warned him about. As a plebe he also began attending services at a Baptist church off the Yard. Later on during his time as a midshipman, he would infrequently attend meetings of the Catholic Midshipman

Club. Through these experiences he continued to develop his Christian faith, an aspect of his life that was becoming an increasingly important part of his identity.

Like every midshipman, during his Youngster year Izbicki took NE 203: Moral Reasoning for Naval Leaders. His instructor taught his class about their obligation to the Constitutional Paradigm—the concept that service members, through their Oath of Office, are duty-bound to serve a hierarchy of obligations: Constitution, Mission, Service, Ship, Shipmate, Self. The concept seemed to make sense to Izbicki. Yet for him, God was always at the top of the hierarchy, as he felt that his service to others as a future Naval officer ultimately stemmed from a desire to serve God. At the time, MIDN Izbicki never considered how doing so could create a conflict with his ability to serve the Mission, the Service, his Ship, or his Shipmates.

Through the NE 203 course Izbicki gained a general understanding of Just War Theory. He learned the difference between lawful and unlawful orders and the importance of rules of engagement in combat. He read about the psychology involved in taking a life in Dave Grossman's *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. But with over two years left before commissioning, the potential duty to kill felt more like a distant possibility than a hard reality. Having grown up in the time of Desert Storm and the Global War on Terror, it never occurred to Izbicki that anyone, even Christians, would view war as an inherently inappropriate or unjust act. As a midshipman, he simply assumed that war was an inevitability that service members like him would face, and that his best course of action was to determine how he could participate honorably in warfare.

Midshipman Izbicki was resolute in his commitment to become the best Naval officer that he could be. Through summer cruises and an internship at the National Security Agency, he developed a drive to select a service assignment that would be technical in nature. Submarines seemed like a good fit for him; he had come to understand and appreciate the role of the nuclear submarine and its deterrent effects in the Nuclear Triad. At the time, Izbicki did not view ballistic missile submarines' armament of nuclear weapons as functionally any different from the military's use of conventional weapons.

4. From Graduate School to Power School—Doubts Arise

In 2008, Ensign Izbicki graduated from the Naval Academy with a double major in computer science and mathematics, and was commissioned as a submarine officer. Academically, ENS Izbicki had performed well enough at the Academy to earn the opportunity to work on a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University both before and directly after commissioning. His coursework was relatively light during the fall after commissioning, and so he spent much of his free time deepening his faith by reading books on Christianity. It was during this time that Izbicki first encountered the idea of Christian pacifism—that there were and are Christians who oppose war in all its forms, due to the harm that it perpetuates against humanity.

In December 2008, ENS Izbicki reported to Charleston, South Carolina to begin the first stage of his submarine officer training at “Nuclear Power School.” This six-month course was designed to arm submarine officers with the requisite technical knowledge to capably stand all watch positions on a submarine. This included the Weapons Officer position, which was directly responsible for launching the nuclear weapons from a ballistic missile submarine if ordered to do so. In this new training environment, the idea that he could be directly responsible for the launch of a nuclear weapon—with the potential to take hundreds of thousands of lives in one fell swoop—became a much more tangible possibility to ENS Izbicki than when he first pondered the idea of becoming a submarine officer at the Naval Academy.

As he went through the training pipeline, doubts began to surface in his mind as to whether he would be able to actually fulfill his military duty. He felt uneasy with the idea that he may be put in a position to launch a nuclear weapon with only a bare order to do so—no background information as to why it was being launched or who the intended target would be. Being in such a position would require complete moral trust in whoever was sending the order to fire. ENS Izbicki wasn't sure that he could blindly give such trust without endangering his character, his sense of self—perhaps even his soul.

ENS Izbicki also began to develop a new perspective that questioned the employment of these kinds of weapons. Inevitably the effects of such a weapon would be

devastating to anyone within a given radius of its detonation, whether combatant or civilian. Izbicki began to entertain the notion that the use of nuclear weapons against an enemy was not a morally just way to fight war.

In that concern, Izbicki is far from alone. In fact, the ethics of employing nuclear weapons is an aspect of being a submarine officer that many have felt ill-prepared to deal with—even those who have successfully completed underway tours on nuclear-armed submarines.

In thermonuclear warfare, there is no historical data to understand how the use of the modern nuclear weapon plays out, as there is no reference of actual employment in war beyond those bombs dropped by the United States on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II (Hart, 2022). According to Michael Quinlan, however, even within a decade of their employment in 1945, newer fusion-based weapons had been developed whose explosive potential was many times more powerful (Quinlan, 2009, p. 9). This, Quinlan suggest, has made it possible for the nations who wield such weapons to enact virtually infinite and unstoppable destructive power (p. 9). For a weapons officer in control of more than 20 nuclear weapons on a ballistic submarine, it is a real possibility that if they receive and execute the order to launch, they may subsequently surface to find that there is nothing left of their family, their community, or their nation in the wake of chain-reaction nuclear exchange (Hart, 2022). Even if the worst-case scenario hasn't been realized, these Navy men and women will almost assuredly have played a central and significant role in the deaths of millions, perhaps even hundreds of millions of people, many of them innocent civilians.

Despite this massive responsibility placed on the shoulders of submarine officers, the community at-large generally does not openly discuss the ethics surrounding the job that they are assigned to do (Hart, 2022). They practice drills for employing these weapons by pulling the red trigger on the joystick that would initiate a launch—perhaps up to 4,000 times over the course of a department head's career (Hart, 2022). Yet they have no way to connect this action to the unmatched destructive power that lies at their fingertips (Hart, 2022). They are not encouraged to think about the enormous consequences that such a trivial physical movement could bring about (Hart, 2022).

Izbicki was drawn back to contemplating the concept of Just War Theory that he had come to understand from his time at the Naval Academy. He knew that in order for the war to be considered just, it had to adhere to the principles of discrimination and proportionality. Specifically, war must be conducted in a way that would allow for its participants to effectively discriminate by targeting combatants while avoiding civilian casualties. It also had to be implemented by means that were proportional to the adversarial threat. Considering the devastating potential of nuclear weapons, their use almost guaranteed the loss of civilian life. How, then, Izbicki wondered, could their indiscriminate use ever be considered just? And under what possible circumstance could a situation arise in which their employment could be proportionate? And how could he agree to launch them without sufficient information to know those criteria had been met?

As ENS Izbicki thought through the moral implications of the devastation that nuclear weapons could impart, he began to extend this questioning to the Navy's conventional weapons as well, the torpedoes, the Tomahawk missiles, and the rest. There were certainly a host of relevant differences, but conventional weapons could still be employed to take numerous lives. From a moral perspective, Izbicki wondered whether there was a difference between lives taken using nuclear weapons, versus lives taken using conventional weapons. At what point, he wondered, did the line exist between weapons whose use against the enemy he could justify, and those whose use he could not?

Izbicki recalled that during the initial in-briefings at the command, he and his classmates had been shown a motivational video that was meant to get them excited for their training. The video depicted missiles striking enemy vehicles, utterly destroying them. Izbicki watched silently as his classmates cheered in response. It seemed that his classmates derived some excitement from the notion of killing the enemy, a feeling that he did not share. Then, at one point, when addressing the class, the commanding officer of Power School had stated, "If you aren't enjoying the work that you're doing, then you shouldn't be here." Up to that point, Izbicki had felt so confident that his life was on the right path. Now, he wasn't so sure...

5. The Psychological Test

Toward the end of the training pipeline in early 2009, ENS Izbicki and his classmates took a routine psychological test. One of the questions that he was asked was whether he would be willing to turn the key to launch a nuclear missile. Izbicki paused, staring at the question. He knew the answer that the command was looking for... the “right” answer. But as hard as he tried to talk himself into saying “yes,” he could not bring himself to write it. He answered “no” to the question. Though uncommon, this response wasn’t particularly unusual for the command; of the 200 junior officers in Izbicki’s class, four of them, including himself, had responded “no” to this question. The answer automatically triggered a meeting with a psychologist, who evaluated ENS Izbicki, and told him that his wrestling with the question of whether he was willing to launch a nuclear weapon was a normal reaction. Observing no psychological issues in Izbicki, the psychologist recommended that he continue with his training.

Yet ENS Izbicki himself felt somehow dissatisfied with this outcome. How could he be expected to continue to train toward something he believed he could not do? He decided to meet with a chaplain to discuss how uncomfortable he was becoming with the path his career was now taking him down.

It was at this point that the chaplain shared that Izbicki might be a conscientious objector—a service member with “a firm, fixed, and sincere objection to participation in war in any form or the bearing of arms, by reason of religious training and/or belief” (DOD 1300.06). He may simply believe that killing another human being was everywhere and always morally wrong. Handing Izbicki an application, he encouraged him to take time to think about whether applying for status as a conscientious objector might be the right choice.

Izbicki took the papers from the chaplain, and reflected on what his next step might be.

At first, he had considered applying for noncombatant status—perhaps to become a military doctor or join the chaplaincy. This would have allowed him to continue to serve his country in uniform—a desire that he still strongly held—but not in a combat role. For

Izbicki, however, these paths had their issues. As a doctor in the Navy, Izbicki's primary duty would still be to enhance America's warfighting capabilities by ensuring that its sailors were fit for combat. Izbicki was not willing to contribute to war in any way, including through medicine.

The possibility of serving as a Chaplain seemed to speak much more vividly to where he found himself in his spiritual journey, but a much more fundamental problem faced him with this alternative: How could he comfort a service member who may be struggling with the same reticence to kill that he did? Izbicki could not envision himself approaching such a situation with the appropriate sense of neutrality that would be required.

Given these factors, Izbicki reasoned that applying for noncombatant status was not his best option. Instead, in October 2009, he opted to submit his application for conscientious objector status.

6. The Application

Izbicki was surprised at the amount of push-back that he received for submitting his application to the command in Charleston. They seemed to drag their feet with it, and Izbicki had to remind them several times about what the next steps in the process were. Eventually he was assigned an investigating officer to interview him and review his application. Immediately he felt an air of hostility from the investigator, who made it clear to Izbicki that he was skeptical of his intentions for applying to become a conscientious objector. Izbicki felt that he was being perceived as a cheater, as someone who was trying to cheat the system out of the payback for the education that he had received at the Academy and Johns Hopkins. This frustrated Izbicki, who had tried to make it clear through his application that his goal was to still find a way to be of service to his country through a different means. He found it strange that the Navy had extended automatic trust to him as an officer to fulfill very consequential duties on a multi-billion dollar submarine, but that after vocalizing his doubts about having to fulfill those duties, the same trust was not extended to his conscientious objector application process.

This period was an isolating time for ENS Izbicki. Because his graduate studies at Johns Hopkins had put him off-schedule from the rest of his peers from the Naval Academy, he did not have many close friends to confide in about his situation. And the segments of his submarine training pipeline were so short that he did not have much opportunity to develop new friendships

The application process took six months, and resulted in a denial. This left ENS Izbicki feeling confused about how he was expected to fulfill his duties as a submarine officer now that he had notified his superiors through this process that he was unwilling to do so. Determining that he needed outside assistance, he reached out to the GI Rights Hotline, who connected him with lawyers to assist him in preparing a second application.

All the while, ENS Izbicki continued through his training pipeline, graduating from Charleston and heading to his next training command in Groton, Connecticut. About two weeks after the move, in March 2010, he submitted his second application. Meanwhile, ENS Izbicki moved into St. Francis House, a Franciscan Christian community, whose residents included two Franciscan brothers, a number of AmeriCorps workers, and a Native American shaman. While living in this pacifist Christian community, Izbicki devoted himself to regular prayer, either by himself or with fellow residents at regular prayer times in the mornings.

ENS Izbicki's second application was also denied. His lawyers helped him file a petition in federal court to challenge, and he would have to wait months before receiving a ruling from the court. In the meantime, he continued to live at St. Francis House, and served as the Security Officer of the submarine base in Groton, where he oversaw accountability of base keys and processed service members' security clearances.

7. The Federal Court Ruling and Life After the Navy

In February 2011, the federal court ruled that the Navy had not followed correct procedures in assessing ENS Izbicki's religious beliefs. He was granted an honorable discharge from the Navy, and about a week after the ruling he had completed the discharge process. He would not be eligible to receive any VA benefits or GI Bill benefits, and he was required to pay back approximately \$100,000 in tuition costs to the Naval Academy,

based on outstanding time left in his five-year contract. If the Navy had approved his original application in 2009, that bill would have been nearly twice as large.

After leaving the Navy, Izbicki pursued a Ph.D. in computer science through the University of California. He remained convinced that he wanted to make the world a better place, and saw education as a means to do so. In 2015, Izbicki began working on academic exchanges between the United States and other, more traditionally adversarial nations as a way to allow ordinary citizens between these countries to learn more about one another and to improve relations between our country and theirs. Since being discharged, he has counseled some 20 to 30 other service members who themselves desired to apply for conscientious objector status.

B. LESSON PLAN

1. Students Outcomes

At the successful completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the obligations outlined in the constitutional paradigm and the oath to the U.S. Constitution.
2. Evaluate how those obligations could conflict with other obligations of moral significance, such as one's obligation to one's faith, or one's obligation to family.
3. Analyze conscientious objection and its use within the United States military.
4. Evaluate students' own views regarding the morality of use of force against combatants in military operations.
5. Evaluate the ethical issues related to the use of nuclear weapons in warfare.
6. Evaluate if there is an ethical difference between the employment of nuclear weapons and conventional weapons.

7. Analyze the moral and ethical effects that the employment of nuclear weapons may have on service members who are designated to maintain and launch them.

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3. Videos

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4. Discussion Questions

1. Why do we allow service members to apply for conscientious objector status? Why is conscientious objection a valuable mechanism for our society to have in place?

2. The Constitutional Paradigm outlines a service member's moral obligation to a hierarchy of Constitution, Mission, Service, Ship, Shipmate, and finally, Self. How should one reconcile moral obligations to other entities outside this hierarchy—like the obligation to that one has to a higher power, or the obligation that one has to his or her family?
3. Why is this case study titled the way that it is?
4. As a junior officer, if a sailor or Marine approached you with a desire to apply for conscientious objector status, how would you respond? What would your thoughts be toward them?
5. Is there an ethical difference between employing nuclear weapons in warfare, and implementing conventional weapons? If so, what is the difference? If not, why not?

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V. USS *MASON* CASE STUDY

A. CASE STUDY

Unless otherwise noted, all facts of this case study are sourced from a speech given by CAPT Stephen Aldridge. See Appendix O for a transcript of the speech.

1. Introduction

“Vampire, Vampire, All hands brace for shock.” On 9 October 2016 shortly after 1900, LT Tom Williams bellowed those words into the 1MC, a system used to make a public announcement to the crew aboard USS *Mason* (DDG 87). “Vampire, Vampire” is a code phrase to alert the crew of an inbound missile, however this would be the first time USS *Mason*’s crew would hear the phrase and not be in a training environment. Yet the 1MC broadcast onboard the USS *Mason* that day was unmistakable. For the first time since the Vietnam War, a U.S. ship was under fire. The crew aboard USS *Mason* sprang into action as the C-802 anti-ship cruise missile raced towards their ship.

2. USS *Mason* in the Bab el-Mandeb strait

USS *Mason* was commanded by CDR Chris Gilbertson, a native of Minnesota, who enlisted as an Interior Communications sailor in 1988. He was selected for the enlisted education advancement program and was commissioned as an officer after earning a Bachelor in Electrical Engineering from Hawaii Pacific University (United States Navy, 2020). By his side was the Executive Officer, CDR Stephen Aldridge, a 1998 graduate of the United States Naval Academy. CDR Aldridge commissioned from the Naval Academy with a degree in Systems Engineering and a set of orders to USS *Barry* (DDG 52) (United States Navy, 2021). Together the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer had served across ten ships in the U.S Fleet and were well prepared to take USS *Mason* and the over 280 men and women in their crew on a deployment.

USS *Mason* was named in honor of John Young Mason, a Secretary of the Navy for Presidents John Tyler and James K Polk and two ships that previously held the namesake. While the previous ships named after John Mason are historically

commendable, neither came close to the firepower this Arleigh Burke class destroyer was equipped with across the 509 feet its keel extended. The typical Arleigh Burke class destroyer is equipped with a 5-inch gun, a 20mm Phalanx CIWS, two surface vessel torpedo tube launchers, and 96 cells that have the capability to launch missiles and torpedoes, making USS *Mason* a modern warship that doesn't shy away from a fight.

On October 1, the HSV-2 *Swift*, a gray-hulled hybrid catamaran serving as a commercial vessel for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was attacked by the Yemeni Houthi rebels. Analysts suggest the attack was made using a C-802 anti-ship cruise missile ("Missile Attack Destroys Ex-Navy Ship off Yemen," 2016).

USS *Mason* was homeported in Norfolk, Virginia, however in October of 2016 the ship had been deployed for five months as part of the Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group. Over the course of the deployment, the ship had completed multinational exercises, routine maritime security operations, and submarine tracking operations. USS *Mason* had just embarked a U.S. Coast Guard boarding team and was set for more maritime security operations. After reports of the attack on the HSV-2 *Swift*, tasking changed and USS *Mason* set a course for the Bab el-Mandeb.

The Bab el-Mandeb strait is located between Yemen and Djibouti. From coast to coast the strait is about 15 miles wide, transiting through the Bab el-Mandeb would be considered relatively close to land compared to transiting the open ocean. The Bab el-Mandeb serves as one of the most important waterways for the global navigation of merchant ships (Al Arabiya, 2020). This is because the Mediterranean Sea is linked with the Red Sea using the Suez Canal, and once in the Red Sea, vessels transit through the Bab el-Mandeb to get to the Gulf of Aden and ultimately the Indian Ocean. This navigation route is used frequently by merchant vessels as the most direct route to their destination. Figure 2 shows a map of the Bab-el-Mandeb strait and surrounding areas.



Figure 2. Map of Bab-el-Mandeb strait and surrounding areas

In 2016, Yemen was in the midst of civil war. On one side, the Houthi rebels aligned themselves with Iran and were supported by the former president's soldiers. On the other side, Yemen's internationally recognized government was backed by a coalition of ten countries, including Saudi Arabia (Shay, 2017). Initially, the Houthis implemented a strategy of striking Saudi and coalition military targets with ballistic missiles, however they transitioned to targeting critical infrastructure and civilian maritime assets operating in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait (Jones, 2021). As a result, the Office of Naval Intelligence stated that attacks on ships in the strait, especially commercial ones, would trigger U.S. involvement to protect the navigational freedom of civilian vessels (Al Arabiya, 2020).

As USS *Mason* made its way toward the Bab el-Mandeb, CDR Aldridge mustered officers and chiefs in order to brief them on the ship's new tasking. Word spread quickly down the ranks, eliciting mixed reactions from the crew. A few sailors reacted apprehensively, while others seemed to not comprehend the gravity of the ship's tasking. Most of the crew, however, was excited for the opportunity to finally put their years of training to the test. "We're going to where the action is!" was a phrase heard throughout USS *Mason*.

3. Missile Inbound

“Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win.” This Sun Tzu maxim was the quote of the day in USS *Mason*’s Plan of the Day on Sunday, October 9th, 2016, published only hours before a cruise missile attack.

Shortly after 1900, a coastal defense cruise missile (CDCM) was fired from a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen (Combat Action Ribbon Unit Award Recommendation, 2017). Moments after the Vampire call, LT Tom Williams, the on-watch Tactical Action Officer, rolled the firing key green and gave the order, “Kill track Mike-November-Zero-Zero-One.” Petty Officer Second Class Eric-Lee Howard, the Missile Systems Supervisor repeated, “Kill track Mike-November-Zero-Zero-One,” authorized the missiles, and reported “birds away!”

“BOOM, BOOM.” As the counter missiles left the USS *Mason*, a smell of smoke and an extreme heat produced by the missiles ignition system rushed over the deck in an instant. The missiles were launched just forward of the pilot house. Watch standers that were outside felt the full effect from the blast of the counter missiles that left USS *Mason*. Out of impulse, some of the watch standers outside hit the deck and curled up, but promptly resumed their duties.

Across the ship, sailors sprang into action to support the ship and set zebra—a material condition used during times of general quarters and specific damage control scenarios. Zebra is the most restrictive material condition in which, valves, fittings, hatches and scuttles are closed in order to divide the ship’s integrity into smaller compartments. This prevents or slows casualties and increases the chance of the ship’s survivability. Setting material condition is a well-rehearsed evolution on every ship in the U.S. Navy. Hull Maintenance Technician Petty Officer First Class Chris Baxter: “On the 9th of October I reported to Repair Locker 3, I made sure my fire party and repair parties were ready to go if called on to save our ship... it was the fastest and best I have ever seen zebra set.” USS *Mason* would remain in that condition for the next five days (Appendix P).

“In the moment the situation almost seemed surreal,” recalls ENS Jef Van Hoof, USS *Mason*’s Officer of the Deck. “I had been qualified for seven days and was thrust into a situation that required all of my knowledge and concentration.”

At this point, USS *Ponce* (LPD 15), a high value unit, and USS *Mason* were tactically maneuvering to gain separation from the Yemen coast. As they transit away from the coast a second inbound missile track appeared on the combat system display screen. This time the track would drop, likely the inbound missile ran out of fuel and sank in the water before USS *Mason* completed the firing chain to engage the track with counter missiles.

As the ship went back to normal operations watch standers onboard USS *Mason* swore only 10–15 minutes elapsed between the two inbound missiles. However, there was a full 62 minutes between the two inbound missiles that day. Stress, concentration, and focus played a defining factor on how the crew perceived the time difference between the two inbound missiles.

U.S. warships typically complete a combat training scenario in one to two hours and when all training objectives have been met, the announcement, “stop the clock, stop the problem,” is made. In this case, there was no “stop the problem.” Simple norms now became stressful decisions. CDR Aldridge recalled some of the thoughts the USS *Mason*’s crew were now challenged with, “*Can I let down my guard? Can I get some sleep? Take a shower? Grab some chow? When is it safe to conduct a watchteam turnover?*” It was a hard night for anyone onboard USS *Mason* to get rest.

4. “You Should Have Been Here”

After 38 hours, around 0900 on October 11th, USS *Mason* finally departed the Red Sea, and headed south through the Bab-el-Mandeb strait into the Gulf of Aden. There was a scheduled refueling at sea and passenger transfer on October 12th (Ship’s Deck Log of USS *Mason*, 2016). For sailors that came aboard during the passenger transfer news of the inbound missiles was extremely surprising. At this time there was a particular pride in being a Destroyerman that radiated from the sailors that were on USS *Mason* during the

attack. This pride was different than normal and was a feeling that the incoming members could not fully comprehend.

During this time, CDR Aldridge recalls asking the Chaplain, “What do you think about having a Special Psychiatric Rapid Intervention Team (SPRINT) come out to the ship?” The Chaplain replied, “All I see are chest bumps and high fives in the P-ways.”

Three days after that historic inbound missile, on the evening of October 12th, USS *Mason* was escorting USS *San Antonio* (LPD 17) and a U.S. flagged merchant, *Green Ridge*, back into the Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb strait (Combat Action Ribbon Unit Award Recommendation, 2017). During the transit, as a helicopter was getting refueled on the fantail, LT Williams once again called “Vampire, Vampire” on the 1MC. It turns out the new crew members hadn’t missed out on a once in a lifetime opportunity after all. In less than 72 hours, what had been a historic event seemed to become a routine part of life onboard USS *Mason*.

EMC Holmes was standing as Engineering Officer of the Watch during the second attack. He remembers thinking to himself, “wow they really want to kill us” (Appendix P). While sailors felt a sense of pride after the first engagement, the tone of the ship started to shift after realizing the first engagement would not be an isolated event.

After the second attack, USS *Mason* and the other ships transited north to the central Red Sea. “*Two attacks in 4 days, now what?*” The crew started to question the mission. “*What are we doing? Are we going to respond? What’s the plan?*” The perspective on the ship changed from, “*We’re awesome!* to “*Why are we still here? This is a bad place to hang out!*” The crew became frustrated—some of them particularly so. “*Is the plan to just hangout here until we get hit? Why aren’t we fighting back?*” For the next few days when the ship’s 1MC was keyed sailors took a step toward their battle station only to hear routine word being passed.

5. Returning Fire?

No matter how many times the “why” of the mission was explained, at this point the crew was unsatisfied with being at risk and not being able to attack back. Many began

to wonder whether the mission of protecting a sea lane was really worth their lives. This was not a war, but rather protecting a merchant traffic lane (Appendix Q).

Regardless of the “why” of the mission, one thing was clear: USS *Mason* sailors were eager to utilize the offensive capabilities of their ship. They craved the satisfaction of knowing that those firing at USS *Mason* would not go without repercussion. However, early in the morning on October 13th, when superiors sent a tomahawk missile firing order to take out coastal radar sites, the USS *Mason* was not on its receiving end. Instead, USS *Nitze* (DDG 94) was tasked to launch the tomahawks, while USS *Mason* stood by as the back-up shooter.

The USS *Mason* crew was frustrated they were not selected as the primary firing unit. “We’re the ones being shot at, why aren’t we shooting back?” CDR Gilbertson and CDR Aldridge explained to the crew, “that this was not just the Houthi rebels versus USS *Mason*.” Allowing USS *Nitze* to deploy the tomahawks made it clear that this decision was not retaliatory or rash, but calculated, deliberate, and proportional. Firing from the USS *Nitze* was meant to maximize the chances of future deterrence, but it took a hard toll on the morale of the sailors onboard USS *Mason*.

6. One Last Fateful Trip through the Bab el-Mandeb

On October 15th, USS *Mason*, was operating in the southern Red Sea with USS *Ponce* and USS *Nitze* when an all-too-familiar call rang out over the 1MC (Combat Action Ribbon Unit Award Recommendation, 2017). “Vampire, Vampire”—this time by LT Jeff Swaim. Five anti-ship cruise missiles were launched from Houthi controlled areas of Yemen at USS *Mason* and ships in company over a span of three hours (Combat Action Ribbon Unit Award Recommendation, 2017). Protecting the force required the deployment of multiple decoys, firing counter missiles, and tactical ship maneuvering. During this time combat information center (CIC) was focused on defensive tactics and correcting combat system casualties. As time passed the Chief Engineer, LT Frank Dore, called CDR Aldridge in CIC, “Sir, you need to keep updating the crew. The last thing they heard was you calling away an inbound missile.” Up until that phone call CIC was so engaged nobody

updated the crew on the status of the inbound missiles and many sailors remained in a braced position—waiting for the ship to be impacted by an inbound missile.

The 15th of October is a day that every sailor aboard USS *Mason* will remember for the rest of their life. Many sailors showed bravery and ran toward danger, others remember staying in the braced position for what seemed an eternity, and a few that were overwhelmed with emotion reported to their battle stations and shed tears as they held onto a close shipmate.

After the three-hour engagement, no casualties or injuries were reported, and the ship resumed normal operations. USS *Mason* headed north through the Suez Canal and set a destination for Greece where they re-loaded the missiles and decoys that had been expended. Relative to inbound missiles the rest of USS *Mason*'s 7-month deployment was uneventful and concluded in December when the ship sailed back to its homeport in Norfolk, VA.

Later that year USS *Mason* and her crew would receive the Battenberg Cup, awarded to the best all-around ship or submarine in the Atlantic Fleet. Additionally, the crew was awarded a Combat Action Ribbon signifying their participation in surface combat. The attacks on USS *Mason* made sailors realize the reality of being a warfighter—no matter their position on the ship. This reality may have made some sailors start to question if a life of service in the military was still the path they wanted to take.

B. LESSON PLAN

1. Objective

At the successful completion of this case study the student will be able to:

1. Evaluate the nature of the military profession, regardless of the community they may serve.

Analyze why, even after multiple attacks and a discouraged crew, ships may be tasked to remain in a dangerous area of responsibility.

Analyze why the USS *Mason*'s crew would want to fire back, why restraint may be required, and how those features relate to military obligations and the ethics of war.

2. Evaluate the significance of being a combatant over an extended period of time.
3. Explain how moral perception was shaped as the environment shifted, specifically on deployment prior to the inbound missile, after the first attack, and after the second/third attack.

2. Supplemental Readings

1. Vaughan, J. et al. (2016, October 12). *Missile Attacks on the USS Mason: Principles to Guide a U.S. Response*. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/missile-attacks-uss-Mason-principles-guide-us-response>

3. Videos

1. NBC News. (2016, October 12). *Missile Attack Targets U.S. Navy Ship Off Yemen For Second Time | NBC Nightly News* [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-m9R8ee9Sg>

4. Discussion Questions

1. Why did you think this case was assigned? What are the important lessons we as future officers need to learn from this incident?
2. How do you feel about being placed in harm's way as part of a mission? What does this say about the nature of the uniform?
3. If you were an Ensign on USS *Mason*, like ENS Van Hoof, how would you have reacted to the sailors that felt they were in distress?

4. How could you better discuss with your sailors, including those who aren't as directly involved in warfighting (e.g., culinary specialists, logistics/supply specialist, admin) about the nature of the profession?
5. There was a different perspective of the situation after the first engagement compared to the second and third engagement. Why might that have been the case?
6. If you were on USS *Mason* would you have wanted to fire back? Why?
7. Why might the members of the USS *Mason* have wanted to fight back? Was there a desire for revenge or glory? A desire to feel like they were fighting back from this very real threat to their lives? Some combination of the three?
8. What can the link between the desire to fight back and the reasons that the Navy chose for the USS *Mason* not to fire back indicate about the virtues necessary for the military profession? How might we better cultivate those virtues?
9. Why might some of the crew have had misgivings about the mission? How might misunderstandings about the nature of the profession lead to those kinds of problems?
10. How might crew beliefs about the nature of the profession and the mission have contributed to difficulties onboard USS *Mason*?

VI. CONCLUSION

Through this thesis we gained a greater understanding of the pedagogic functionality of the case method in the classroom. We then examined the history and development of the NE 203 ethics course at the United States Naval Academy, and its implementation of case studies in the curriculum, and we identified areas in its curriculum that could benefit from the introduction of new case studies. Based on this understanding, we researched, developed, and authored two case studies that would complement the collection that is currently taught in the NE 203 course. The case study written about ENS Michael Izbicki highlights the role of conscientious objection in our society, the role that religion plays in a service member's obligation to adhere to the constitutional paradigm, and the ethics of nuclear warfare. The case study written about the USS Mason provides an opportunity for readers to understand the reality of committing oneself to a life of military service and the possible risk that may come with the role of being a warfighter, regardless of one's military community. Each case study's complementing lesson plan overviews the student outcomes to be learned from the case, and provides supplemental resources and discussion questions for instructor and student use.

The case studies and lesson plans that we authored on ENS Michael Izbicki and the USS Mason are written for natural implementation into the Naval Academy's NE 203 ethics course curriculum. However, they may also be more broadly applied to any ethics or leadership course either in the military or civilian sectors. We hope that these case studies may positively influence the moral development of future military leaders, and may contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to ethical leadership within the United States Department of Defense.

Throughout the development of this thesis, we identified several topics that warrant future research. We suggest that the Naval Academy's NE 203 course curriculum be studied in-depth, to measure its effectiveness in positively affecting the moral development of Naval Academy midshipmen (Appendix I, Appendix J). Finally, our interviews with senior NE 203 instructors revealed a number of topics and themes that could benefit from future the creation of case studies. These include cases involving the aviation and cyber

warfare communities (Appendix H), cases related to naval operations in the Western Pacific (Appendix I), cases on the U.S. Navy's Tailhook and Fat Leonard scandals (Appendix I), and case studies related to diversity and inclusion regarding the topics of gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, and race (Appendix K).

APPENDIX A. NE 203 SYLLABUS EXCERPT

NE 203: Ethics and Moral Reasoning for Naval Leaders

Syllabus and Course Policy

Spring 2022

The Purpose of this Course

“As an officer in the Armed Forces of the United States, you are a citizen-soldier, a warrior in the profession of arms, a member of a skilled profession, an unwavering defender of the Constitution and a servant of the Nation. A leader of character, you accept unmitigated personal responsibility and accountability to duty, for your actions and those of your subordinates.” (*The Armed Forces Officer*, ch.1)

Our government and our fellow citizens place a “special trust and confidence” in members of the military. America relies on its military to serve as guardians of the rights and freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution. As such, military professionals, particularly within the officer corps, are expected not only to be experts in the execution and management of state violence, but also to internalize and model the values that our Constitution represents. Upon commissioning, you will be expected not only to keep your promise to “support and defend” the Constitution, but also to be persons of character and morally worthy of praise.

The purpose of NE203 is to prepare you to fulfill the special moral obligations inherent in your commission and your oath of office. You should come away from this course with a deeper appreciation for the moral complexities of officership, a richer understanding of the ethical demands of combat leadership, a basic understanding of classical and contemporary thought in moral philosophy, and a roadmap for putting moral theory to work in the service of practical moral reasoning.

Our course is structured around four major themes. The first is *moral perception*. During this block of instruction, we consider how we perceive the moral world and factors that may bias or interfere with that perception. Second, we turn to *moral deliberation* and the central question of moral philosophy: “what is the right thing to do?” Our third major theme, *moral excellence*, focuses on character and virtue. Finally, we explore the *Just War Tradition* and consider how we can fight and win with honor.

Course Outcomes

At the successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Analyze the social and situational pressures that complicate and influence moral perception.
2. Synthesize different moral considerations to aid in making complex moral decisions.

3. Evaluate the proper role of moral excellences, especially in light of experimenting with and reflecting upon the role of virtues in a flourishing, fulfilling life.
4. Be able to apply objectives 1–3 in order to evaluate the moral obligations and responsibilities of military leadership.
5. Be able to apply objectives 1–3 in order to evaluate moral questions regarding warfare, specifically when considering questions of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*.

Organization

The course will be structured around three meetings per week (with occasional exceptions for holidays and exams). Normally, for the first meeting of each week our philosophers will lead a discussion attended by multiple sections. For the other two meetings of the week, we will break into smaller discussion sections, facilitated by your Military Instructor. Your sections will review the theories presented during the Monday meetings and then apply these theories to concrete cases. Every week your goal should be to leave your Tuesday/Thursday or Wednesday/Friday discussion with working knowledge of the ethical theory for the week and the ability to see its application to the profession and your life.

Requirements

1. Preparation and Participation.

In the best of learning environments, everyone participates in discovering and sharing knowledge. This course relies on your participation. You are expected, therefore, not only to read attentively all assigned material, but also to show up for class prepared to discuss these ideas critically and to apply them to historical and contemporary cases. Your preparation and participation grade will be based on your contributions to the intellectual exchange throughout the week (during both our Monday meetings and section discussions) and periodic reading checks and quizzes (some of which will be announced, most of which will not).

Be prepared to take notes (*NB*: students who take notes tend to do well in this class; those who don't tend to struggle, especially during midterms and finals).

2. Application Papers

You will write two application papers for this course (one 1000 to 1500-word essay and one 1200 to 1800-word essay). The application papers correspond with Blocks One ("Moral Perception"), and two ("Moral Deliberation") and Four ("Just War"). You will receive a prompt at the beginning of each of the first two blocks of instruction. For Block Three ("Moral Excellence"), you will be writing four reflection papers (see below).

3. Reflection Papers.

You must be a person of character to be an exemplar and a good officer. The purpose of the reflection paper assignments is to give you a space to consider how character can be systematically developed.

While there is an academic component, the building of character and formation of virtue is primarily a practical and experiential enterprise. During Block Three ("Moral

Excellence”), therefore, we will ask you to engage in character-building activities, and then reflect on those experiences. This part of the critical enterprise is more personal, or experimental, if you like. Our aim includes working toward a better understanding of ourselves, of our actions and commitments, of how we relate to the rest of the world, and of how we can order our lives to affect change in ourselves—in other words, to gain an appreciation for the fact that character is not fixed.

This task shouldn’t be confused with contrived genuflection or fatuous navel-gazing, however. The reflection papers are a forum for making connections between material from class and aspects of your own life, other experiences you’ve had, other classes you’ve taken, other projects you’re involved with, etc. They are an opportunity to voice opinions and explore ideas that have arisen in the context of the work for this course; to demonstrate learning through application; and to interpret, critique and expand on ideas from class discussion and readings. You will receive the prompts a week before they are due.

4. Examinations.

There will be a midterm and final examination. The exams will test your comprehension of the readings, your ability to achieve the learning outcomes, and your ability to apply theory to practice.

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APPENDIX B. NE 203 BLOCK I LEARNING OUTCOMES.

BLOCK I: Moral Perception: How to See Well

At the successful completion of this block, the student will be able to:

- A. Analyze the importance of moral perception to ethical behavior (I, IV)
- B. Evaluate the way culture, subcultures, and social factors can influence moral perception, moral deliberation, and moral excellence (I, II, III)
- C. Explain how moral actions can still be said to be categorically wrong or right despite the way culture and subcultures shape moral perception (I, II)

Week 1:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

- 1. Identify and analyze the way different cultures, religious doctrines, and philosophical perspectives shape moral perception. (A, B)
- 2. Evaluate appropriate ways to engage in moral discourse despite the differences in #1 (B, C)
- 3. Apply #1-2 to evaluate a case study about ethical military leadership and moral discourse with foreign cultures (A, B, C)

Week 2:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

- 1. Explain how rationalization and socialization can undermine and corrupt organizations (B, C)
- 2. Analyze and apply different concepts of integrity and explain how consistency of character can sometimes lead to errors in moral perception. (B, C)
- 3. Describe how 1–2 can negatively impact moral decision making in a military context (A, B, C)
- 4. Explain social-scientific literature regarding contingent social factors that shape moral awareness (e.g., Milgram, Asch, etc.) (B, C)

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APPENDIX C. NE 203 BLOCK II LEARNING OUTCOMES.

BLOCK II Moral Deliberation: How to Choose Well

At the successful completion of this block, the student will be able to:

- A. Explain the four moral factors (constraints, consequences, character, and special obligations) and apply the first three moral factors in ethical deliberation (II)
- B. Evaluate the role of human dignity and autonomy in ethics (II)
- C. Analyze the long-term and short-term consequences of moral choices and evaluate the impact such consequences ought to have on moral deliberation in general, and in military leadership, in particular (II, IV)
- D. Evaluate the appropriate relationship between constraints and consequences in general and in a military context (II, IV)
- E. Evaluate the role special obligations ought to play in moral deliberation and analyze the significance of special obligations have for military leadership (II, IV)

Week 3:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

- 1. Explain the four moral factors useful for ethical deliberation (A)
- 2. Analyze how considerations of dignity constrain our moral deliberations by prohibiting actions (A, B)
- 3. Explain the foundations of human dignity (B)
- 4. Explain the moral implications of demonstrating respect for human beings, to include understanding what it is to objectify someone or something (B)
- 5. Evaluate how respect for persons ought to be expressed in the military (B, D, E)

Week 4:

- 1. Evaluate how Kant's Universal Law formulation of the Categorical Imperative functions as a constraint in moral deliberation (A, B)
- 2. Evaluate the issues created by treating someone as a mere means as argued by Kant and functions as a constraint in moral deliberation (A, B)
- 3. Analyze how rights function as constraints in moral deliberations. (A, D)
- 4. Evaluate the role rights ought to play in military service (A, B, D, E)
- 5. Evaluate how the principles of universal law and mere means apply to military service (A, B, D, E)

Week 5:

- 1. Explain how the principle of double effect complicates moral constraints (C, D)
- 2. Evaluate the significance of those complications (e.g. Consider what cases double effect would be too permissive, in what cases is it would be too restrictive?) (C, D)
- 3. Explain how waiving a right eliminates a constraint (C, D)
- 4. Explain how the principle of forfeiture can temporarily suspend certain rights. (B, D)

5. Explain the circumstances in which defensive rights are obtained and evaluate whether particular actions satisfy the conditions for the proper exercise of defensive rights (A, C)
6. Explain and apply different approaches to questions of justice and how they function as constraints in moral deliberations (A, C)
7. Explain the concept of retributive justice and apply retributive justice issues in a military setting (A, E, F)
8. Explain the concept of distributive justice and apply distributive justice issues in a military setting (A, E, F)

Week 6:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze complex short-term and long-term consequences of a given ethical decision (including the consequences of your decision becoming widely known) (C, D)
2. Evaluate how considerations of consequences ought to influence moral deliberations (C, D)
3. Evaluate the cases in which putting more significance on consequential considerations would be appropriate and those in which it would be inappropriate (C)
4. Evaluate the appropriate relationship between constraints and consequences in a military context (E)

Week 7:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

1. Evaluate the role special obligations ought to play in moral deliberation and analyze the significance of special obligations have for military leadership (E)
 2. Identify and analyze the way culture, family, nation, and religion can create and complicate special obligations. (A, E)
 3. Analyze how special obligations can make morally permissible actions morally required, and evaluate whether special obligations can change the status of morally required or morally prohibited actions in extreme circumstances (E)
 4. Explain the difference between dissent and disobedience (E)
 5. Evaluate the constitutional paradigm and the requirements for disobedience (E)
- Evaluate the complex relationship between *religious* beliefs and *military commitments* (A, F)

APPENDIX D. NE 203 BLOCK III PILOT INSTRUCTOR GUIDE EXCERPT

II. MORAL DRILLS

Purpose

We have created a set of reflection papers that are meant to intentionally engage one's mind in order to purposefully enter into a "practice," or "drill," for the moral life. Think of them as high-knee drills in football practice, sprints for the cross-country runner, weights for the swimmer. None of these activities are performed during the game or the meet. They only prepare us in certain ways to perform in the game or meet without thinking about it. They make us ready. To apply these to moral life, they have to be incorporated into one's life. They cannot be dabbled in, so to speak. If they are treated this way, they will have as much impact as if one used their music or sports practice merely to gossip or daydream.

As for the "drills" or practices themselves, there is no universal list, though there are a few that many traditions recognize as helpful and transformative. These include: Study, spending time alone (Solitude), not speaking (Silence), denying oneself a particular good (Fasting), celebrating, submitting to a proper authority (Obedience/Submission), serving others (Service), thankfulness (Gratitude), etc. But they are certainly not limited to these. Also, not everyone will need every practice in order to change habits and prepare themselves well. They will need a good understanding of who they are and the areas in which they want to intentionally grow. For example, if one has trouble with "road rage," and wants to rid herself of that, then there are a couple questions she needs to answer. Is she in a hurry? If so, then she can do at least two things to reform her "rage" response. First, rearrange her day so that she has plenty of time to get from A to B. Second, intentionally drive in the slow lane. Notice, that neither of these are listed in the usual set of practices.

The reflection papers each have a couple of sentences describing the kind of actions and habits that they counteract and that they, if practiced well, can form. They are each assigned during a week that should provide some theoretical background for a particular virtue or vice that is associated with that particular practice. Note again that none of these practices will have anything but surface level effect unless they are consistently, repeatedly, and intentionally practiced. Below is a brief summary of each of the practices available in the course.

Specific Drills

Silence and Solitude: Solitude is being alone and placing oneself in an environment free of distraction. Silence is uninterrupted quiet. Freedom from noise, including talking. They tend to go together. The idea is to disengage to (re)discover one's real feelings and

thoughts and not those thoughts and feelings that have been impressed upon you by your social environment—disengage in order to better re-engage. If practiced well, these two ‘moral drills’ can result in freeing one from a few things depending on her focus and intent, including:

- Negative speech habits (gossip, deception, impression management, etc.)
- Addiction to noise (many people do not want to be alone with their own thoughts)
- The need to be occupied or stimulated
- The many things that the world demands
- Seeing oneself from the perspective of everyone else

If practiced consistently and well, one can develop:

- Greater self knowledge/awareness
- A reminder of who one really is
- Better listening skills
- Comfort in one’s own skin
- Depth of insight
- A deepening appreciation for others
- Ability to mitigate some instances of social influence

Gratitude: Thankfulness is intentionally noticing the good things that surround one and dwelling on them (filling her mind with thoughts of them). These things often (and should) include others, but could include something as simple and sublime as being up early enough to catch the sunrise. If practiced well, gratitude should help one be aware of the many good things in her life, it should curb overly-critical tendencies toward oneself or others and it should help eliminate certain desires for “more” (because she realizes what she’s already got), it helps curb entitlement, and it helps develop humility—because one is likely not responsible for most of the things for which she’s thankful.

Service: offering one’s time, resources, and expertise for the care, protection, justice, and nurture of others. If practiced well, service should help one develop compassion, to identify selfishness in oneself, and to see others as real subjects (not objects), important, and valuable. It is putting aside one’s own time where she would be doing what she wants to do and instead using that time to do something that someone else wants or needs her to do. Engaging in this kind of activity helps one develop other-concern, empathy, a sense of justice, humility, and counteracts selfishness, self-centeredness, and pride.

The Travis Manion Reflection Assignment for Courage: This assignment is not a “drill” *per se*, but has elements of a few: Study, Reflection (perhaps in Silence and Solitude), Community/Friendship. The aim is to put oneself in another’s shoes. Study and reflection are important for this. Then, to learn from a courageous person how to think courageously—this involves a virtuous kind of friendship. The Stoics famously thought that sages (wise people) long dead were friends because they helped the moral progressor take steps toward virtue.

Resilience Reflection: There are three options available for this practice. The idea is to counteract self blame, grudge holding, the need to take vengeance on another, to pay someone back, perhaps pride in one's ability to do everything himself and carry all the burdens. The options are:

- Apology: admitting one's own wrongdoing and asking for forgiveness—this action indicates a desire to restore relationship)
- Forgiveness: an action intended primarily to release one's need to take vengeance on and punish another. It can be, but does not need to be, a restoration of relationship.
- Requesting Help: Admitting one's own finiteness and inability to shoulder every burden. This vulnerable act releases pressures one (usually falsely) places on himself and builds a community of support.

Each of these ways of 'moving past' contains an element of humility. One must overcome some of his pride in order to actually do them in the right spirit. Additionally, note that each action is primarily about one's individual standing with respect to others. One cannot control whether someone you ask for help will actually help you. He cannot control whether someone will forgive him or let him off the hook. And he cannot control whether it will matter to another when he releases her from blame—in fact, she might be upset that he had blamed her in the first place. So, each of these is an exercise in developing a proper perspective regarding how others might think about one's person and also about how one might think about himself.

Fasting: Fasting involves temporarily denying gratification for a particular desire. Usually this is usually associated with food. The idea is to have a physical reminder of one's emptiness in order to recognize how self-indulgent, addictive, and compulsive one's body (and self) can be. Even if one wants to rid herself of a non-food related desire, fasting from food—or from many other good things—can greatly help one learn to appropriately deny her body. It can help one choose to study rather than binge a meaningless season of "name-your-favorite-show." Because we desire to be sensitive to the physical demands of our students, we have chosen to fast from a particular form of media. However, even this, if done well, will lead to self-knowledge and perhaps even freedom from certain desires...or at least the diminishing of the need to gratify those desires.

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APPENDIX E. NE 203 BLOCK III LEARNING OUTCOMES

BLOCK III: Moral Excellence: How to Live well

At the successful completion of this block, the student will be able to:

- A. Apply the four moral factors in making ethical decisions (II)
- B. Evaluate how character is formed through habituation and moral choice (III)
- C. Evaluate the connections between virtues, moral perceptions, choices, and emotions (III)
- D. Evaluate which character traits are needed for the development of military officers (III, IV)
- E. Evaluate the influence of character on military leadership (III, IV)
- F. Evaluate the role that the limits of morality may play in morality (II, III, IV)
- G. Evaluate the ethical significance of military customs, courtesies and rituals (I, II, III, IV)

Week 8:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

- 1. Evaluate the influence of character on moral deliberation (A)
- 2. Analyze the connections between Aristotle's concepts of virtue (*arete*) and happiness (*eudaimonia*). (B)
- 3. Analyze Aristotle's relationship between virtue and vice and Explain how to aim for excellence (B)
- 4. Distinguish between the concepts of vice, weak-will, strong-will, and virtue (B)
- 5. Reflect upon your personal experience and how it might be applied to your future role as a Naval Officer in light of objectives 1–4 (B, C, D)

Week 9:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

- 1. Compare and contrast different views on the nature of pride (D)
- 2. Evaluate the proper role of humility and pride in military service (E)
- 3. Explain the role of principled ritual etiquette (*li* 禮) to military customs, courtesies, and rituals (B,D,E,G)
- 4. Evaluate the proper role of obedience in a military context (B,D,E)
- 5. Reflect upon your personal experience with pride and humility and determine how they might be applied to your future role as a Naval Officer in light of objectives 1–4. (B, C, D, E)

Week 10:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

- 1. Analyze the connection between virtue, reason, and emotions (such as anger) (C)

2. Analyze the nature of temperance and self-mastery and evaluate the proper role of temperance and self-mastery with leadership in a military context (C, D, E)
3. Analyze the relationship between desire, emotion, temperance, and self-mastery (B, C)
4. Apply the principles of Stoicism to better Explain the case of ADM Stockdale (C, D, E)
5. Reflect upon your personal experience with respect to Stoic themes and determine how it might be applied to your future role as a Naval Officer and in light of objectives 1–4 (C, D, E)

Week 11:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

1. Evaluate the role that the limits of morality may play in ethical deliberation (F)
2. Analyze the nature of courage (C, D)
3. Contrast courage and heroism in the profession of arms (D)
4. Evaluate how acts of heroism can be taken as necessary by the actor even if most would consider them “above and beyond the call of duty” (A, B, C, D)
5. Explore how new developments in modern warfare affect traditional notions of courage (B, C, D, E)

Week 12:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze the relationship between injustice, moral injury, resiliency, and moral excellence (E)
2. Analyze the different kinds of moral injury (C)
3. Assess various responses to moral failure while in military service (D, E)
4. Identify practical steps that a leader can take to prepare her people for combat and inoculate them against moral injury as well as ways that a leader can help her people move past tragic events (D, E)

APPENDIX F. NE 203 BLOCK IV PILOT INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Block IV The Just War Tradition

In Block IV, we address the last big question that organizes our course: how can we fight and win with honor?

To answer this question, we really need to start with a more fundamental question: when, if ever, is war morally permissible?

War means killing other human beings. How can that ever be moral?

I. JUST WAR THEORY

Pacifism, Realism, Just War Theory

In general, there have been three answers to the question, “when is war morally permissible.”

The first answer is “never.” The pacifist response to war asks us, in effect, what part of “thou shalt not kill” don’t you understand? Killing is wrong. Always and Everywhere. Full stop.

The second response rejects the question altogether. The realist tradition insists that war is neither moral nor immoral...it’s *amoral*. It is an enterprise that exists outside the bounds of morality. Indeed, a realist would contend that applying the normal constraints of morality to war is itself immoral because that is likely to prolong the conflict.

William Tecumseh Sherman, a Union general during the U.S. Civil War, provided us with the bumper sticker for the realist take on morality in war. “War is cruelty,” he insisted. “There is no use trying to reform it; the crueller it is, the sooner it will be over.”

The third answer to the question “is war morally permissible” is...sometimes. This is the Just War Tradition, and it is the approach we focus on in NE203.

Just War theorists attempt to stake out a moral middle ground between the pacifists and the realists. The just war tradition maintains that, under certain, very limited, conditions, war can be justified.

Just war theory, as we will consider it in this course, consists of two major parts. The first considers when it is justified for a state to go to war. Lawyers and philosophers refer to this by the Latin *jus ad bellum* (literally justice to war).

Jus ad Bellum

Thinking about the justice of war is a tradition reaching back through at least Plato in the 4th Century BCE who famously said, “Only the dead have seen the end of war.” Later, in the 13th Century, Thomas Aquinas articulated three principles for a war to be morally permissible. Just war theorists through the centuries since have considered other conditions that must be met in order for a war to be just. In addition to Aquinas’s original principles three more have been widely embraced.

In this class, we consider these six, principles of *jus ad bellum*.

The first is that war must be declared by a *legitimate authority*. Typically, legitimate authority is understood as a head of state: a president, a king, or a prime minister. The authority to wage war, in other words, resides with “the prince,” not just any war lord who manages to attract the loyalty of armed thugs or hired guns. What constitutes legitimate authority is, however, disputable. Since the establishment of the United Nations, for example, a declaration of war is considered legitimate if it is backed up by a UN resolution. The voice of a significant—and wronged—political community is also generally understood as legitimate.

Second, war must be fought for a *just cause*. This has come to mean, almost exclusively, self-defense or defense of another state that is the victim of aggression. Since the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, states have been generally taken to be members of an international society, whose “citizens” possess two fundamental rights: political society and territorial integrity. Violation of either of these rights constitutes the crime of aggression and justifies, as it would in domestic society, self-defense and law enforcement, *i.e.*, coming to the defense of a victim of aggression.

Michael Walzer asserts that force is also justified against “Acts that shock the moral conscience of mankind” and in response to a “sufficient threat of aggression.” These revisions to more traditional thoughts about just cause potentially justify humanitarian intervention and preemptive (though not preventive) war.

As we shall see as we consider the complexities of modern war at the end of Block IV, some claim that just cause must also include defending citizens of other states whose governments cannot or will not provide for their security. If states that have the *capability* to protect people from illegitimate oppressive regime, some argue they have a *responsibility* to protect. At the core of the just cause criterion is the understanding that all humans possess inherent dignity and worth and, therefore, inherit certain natural rights. Chief among these is the right to life that can be overridden only under extreme circumstances that usually involve an egregious moral violation.

The third criterion is that war must be fought with *right intentions*. It is not enough that a leader can cite a just cause for war. The intention for going to war has to be in concert with that just cause. The decision to go to war must be motivated by the desire to restore justice, not conquest or personal gain. The 1991 Gulf War illustrates this nuance. The just cause of the US-led coalition was the defense of an ally, Kuwait. The stated intention was to drive the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait if it would not leave peaceably. Most agreed that the intention suited the cause. Some pundits, however, urged President Bush to exploit the opportunity, pursue the routed Iraqi Army into Iraq and depose Saddam Hussein. Had Bush pursued this course, this would have been an excellent example in which the cause was just, but the right intention condition was not met. President Bush, as we know, rejected this course of action, and, as a result, many cite the Gulf War as a textbook example of a war in which all of the classic *jus ad bellum* conditions—legitimate authority, just cause, and right intent—were met.

Fourth, war must be a *last resort*. War can be considered a moral option only if a state has exhausted non-violent options like diplomacy or economic pressure.

Fifth, a state must also have a *reasonable hope of success*. Even if a state has a just cause for war, it should not just throw away the lives of its citizens if there is no way it can achieve its just objectives through force.

The final criterion we consider is *proportionality of ends*. The anticipated harm that will result from a war should not exceed the benefits that the state hopes to gain. It is worth noting for your students that proportionality is an assessment that political leaders must make not only in advance of committing their states to war, but also throughout a war. At any point it may become evident that the ends the state hopes to gain are overridden by the costs.

According to most just war theorists, the decision to go to war is the province of statecraft. Heads of state are held morally responsible for these decisions, not soldiers...not our students.

Jus in Bello

Our students will, however, be held morally responsible for *how* they fight the wars that their leaders commit them to. This introduces the second major element of the Just War Tradition: *jus in bello*.

Jus in bello deals with the moral questions of conduct in war, how much force can be justifiably employed in war and against whom. Just war theorists offer three *jus in bello* principles, proportionality, discrimination, and double effect. Some theorists (and some though not all of our Monday Lecturers) will separate a criterion of necessity as distinct from the criterion of proportionality. Be prepared to follow your Monday Lecturer's lead on this.

According to the *jus in bello* criterion of proportionality, no act of war should cause harm disproportionate to the ends we hope to achieve. This does not mean that if your enemy threatens you with a knife you need to drop your rifle and pull out a knife (a common misconception among students). NO! We *want* our enemy to bring a knife to a gunfight. Indeed, the job of a military leaders is to ensure our enemy is always at a disadvantage. Our students need to focus on ends. If the harm averted outweighs the harm done, then the use of force is proportionate.

Proportionality also includes the requirement of *necessity* (once again some will break this out as a separate criterion). It's not permissible to levy destruction in war unless there is *some* military purpose. It is important for your students to remember that war is not *carte blanche* to kill enemy combatants and break things at will. Any death and destruction on the battlefield must serve some military purpose. If you can capture rather than kill without impacting the military mission, you should capture. If you can walk around a wall rather than leveling it without impacting the military mission, walk around the wall.

The second *jus in bello* criterion is *discrimination*. The fundamental moral distinction in war is between combatants and noncombatants. A combatant is someone who is actively engaged in the business of war, a noncombatant is everyone and everything else. A combatant may be intentionally harmed or killed; a noncombatant may not. This requirement is known as noncombatant immunity.

Finally, *double effect*, a principle that we studied in more detail in the moral deliberation block of the course, is also extremely important in determining the morality of actions within war. As in the moral deliberation section, we want your students to evaluate what cases the principle of double effect may be too restrictive and in what cases the principle of double effect may be too permissive while nonetheless appreciating why cases that pass double effect are easier to justify and cases that fail double effect are harder to justify.

While this may sound simple enough, in practice it can be extremely difficult. Our readings will discuss members of the military who, at times, may be considered noncombatants. Examples are medical personnel, chaplains, prisoners of war, and severely wounded enemy combatants. Likewise, our readings will discuss some civilians who, through their involvement in war-related activities, lose their noncombatant immunity.

One question your students will likely ask—and probably should ask—regarding the *jus in bello* criteria is why we should tie our own hands with these constraints? If the war is just, why should we place limits on how we fight and who we kill? This question is especially difficult to answer when our enemies are not playing by the same rules.

There are many ways to answer these questions. Here are three.

First, the ultimate goal of war is not to win. The ultimate goal of war is to reestablish justice or inaugurate a more just peace on the other side of war. *How* a nation fights will influence what that peace will look like. Just ends are rarely achieved through unjust means.

Second, the week we spend exploring moral injury ought to provide sufficient reason to care about the ethics of war. War scars many who participate in it for life—that in itself is a strong moral reason to avoid starting a war in the first place. Moreover, if your students want to be the type of leaders who “take care of their people,” remind them what doing so requires first and foremost: you don’t ask your people to do something morally abhorrent. Recent history has taught us that the moral injuries from the scars of losing your honor are far harder to overcome than those left by physical injuries or lost comrades. Ultimately, that fact should not surprise us. As the Stoics remind us, we are not merely—nor even primarily—our bodies. We are instead the sum of our choices. The choices your people make in war will stay with you for the rest of their days. If you want to take care of them, help them make the right ones.

Finally (and relatedly), it’s precisely these constraints—and nothing else—that distinguishes a warrior from a murderer. When our troops come home, we want them to come home not only victorious, but also as whole human beings. Observing these moral codes—the “code of the warrior”—increases the likelihood that this will happen.

There’s a quote from Douglas MacArthur from a war crimes tribunal after the Second World War that wraps up both of these ideas nicely:

“The soldier, be he friend or foe, is charged with the protection of the weak and unarmed. It is the very essence and reason for his being. When he violates this sacred trust, he not only profanes his entire cult but threatens the very fabric of international society.”

II. JUST WAR: PERCEPTION, MORAL DELIBERATION, AND CHARACTER

Block IV may seem to your students like an abrupt break from the rest of the course. In fact, it is more like a culmination. The just war tradition is anchored in and informed by everything we have discussed in this course to date.

Just War and Moral Perception

We see notions of Moral Perception in considerations of the ethics of war. The torture at Abu Ghraib, the My Lai Massacre, and countless other war crimes stem from the fact that those at war far too often dehumanize the enemy. Too often, they no longer see their enemies (a category that they too often see to include both combatants and noncombatants) as human—in any way. Those at war therefore become blind to their moral requirements, for they regard their fellow human beings as something even worse than mere means, they regard them as an “it” rather than as “he” “she” or “they.” There

will be times throughout the block, like when discussing the *Blackhearts* reading on IEDs, and when discussing Professor Ignatieff's "Five Moral Dilemmas in Modern War," when considering these links to moral perception explicitly may be extremely helpful.

Just War and Moral Deliberation

Although we use different, more historical terminology when dealing with war, the just war criteria fit well with the moral deliberation roadmap we've used throughout the course. In the case of *jus ad bellum*, the criteria of legitimate authority, just cause, and last resort can all be regarded as constraints regarding starting war. Individuals in legitimate states are constrained against starting wars with one another (the Hatfields, for example, are morally prohibited from declaring war on the McCoys) regardless of the legitimacy of the initial grievance one has against the other. Even those with legitimate authority are constrained from starting a war unless there were a just cause and war were a last resort.

There are also considerations of the consequences in *jus ad bellum*. Proportionality of ends is simply a complex consequential calculation for war. Reasonable hope of success is also a consequential consideration. Given the huge negative consequences of war, it would be impermissible to undertake one unless there were some reasonable chance of achieving the positive consequences of a more just peace.

Finally, there are considerations about our collective character. If we lack the right Intentions, then we aren't going to war for the right reasons, and we're demonstrating something is amiss with our collective decision procedures.

As with our moral deliberation road map, we have to look at *all* these elements to decide when war could be morally appropriate. Traditionally, given the huge moral costs of war, within the just war tradition, *all six criteria* had to be met for a war to be considered just. As with the moral deliberation road map, we encourage you to have you students evaluate whether there may be extreme exceptions to that requirement, and if so, what those might be.

The criteria of *jus in bello* also fit well within the moral deliberation roadmap we've used throughout the course. Discrimination is an obvious constraint, perhaps the most important one we will study in the course. Significantly, however, discrimination cannot be outweighed merely because an action passes *proportionality of means*. If this constraint can be outweighed *at all* (and that's highly debatable), it will only be for the kind of seismic, gargantuan, once-a-century consequences at the level of the war itself. For example, Michael Walzer argues that, given the huge moral stakes and the complete lack of any other option, the British bombing of German cities at the beginning of World War II (1940-D-Day invasion) was permissible—even though those bombings failed the principle of discrimination.

Proportionality of means (and necessity) while squarely focused on the consequences, do not compete with discrimination. Instead, this criterion places even further limits on our actions within war. Violence requires justification—even within war—and pragmatic concerns alone (e.g., it would be more convenient for us) cannot satisfy that justificatory burden. That's why even if only combatants, people who have waived their rights, will be impacted, an action still need to pass *proportionality of means* (and necessity). This prohibits all kinds of actions in war, including the use chemical weapons. *Proportionality of means* does not compete with discrimination. Rather it reminds us of the general constraint against the use of violence, even in war, and requires us to be able to justify the use of force.

Just War and Character

Finally, the course's lengthy consideration of character is largely due to the belief that developing character is essential to developing warriors willing and able to follow the rules of war. You have already had lengthy conversations with your students about humility, pride, temperance, and courage. In this section, we ask you to devote even more time specifically to the character traits you and your students take to be essential to following the principles of *jus in bello*. What kinds of character traits are necessary for warriors to be able to follow those rules when bullets are flying? Why? What do our students believe that they ought to be doing now to better develop those character traits that will be so paramount later?

In short, how can our students prepare now for the trials that are to come? That's the central question of NE203 and its one, for our students, we can't fully wrestle with without coming to terms with the thorny questions of what's morally prohibited and morally permitted in war.

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APPENDIX G. NE 203 BLOCK IV LEARNING OUTCOMES.

BLOCK IV Just War Theory: How to be Moral in War

At the successful completion of this block, the student will be able to:

- A. Distinguish between *Jus ad Bellum* and *Jus in Bello* (II, V)
- B. Apply the *Jus ad Bellum* criteria to determine the justice of specific conflicts: modern, historic, and potential (to include humanitarian interventions) (V)
- C. Evaluate the relationship between virtue and justice in war (III, IV, V)
- D. Apply the *jus in bello* principles to actions within war (V)
- E. Evaluate the role of *jus in bello* principles to analyze the ethics of modern military actions (II, IV, V)

Week 13:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

1. Define the *Jus ad Bellum* criteria (A, B)
 - a. Legitimate Authority
 - b. Just Cause
 - c. Right Intention
 - d. Proportionality of Ends
 - e. Last Resort
 - f. Reasonable Hope of Success
2. Apply the *Jus ad Bellum* criteria to determine the justice of specific conflicts, modern and historic (to include humanitarian interventions) (B)
3. Evaluate justifications for humanitarian intervention (B, C)

Week 14:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

1. Define the *jus in bello* principles (A, D)
 1. Proportionality of Means
 2. Discrimination
 3. Necessity
2. Apply the *Jus in bello* principles to determine the justice of actions within war (D)
3. Evaluate the relationship between virtue and justice in war (C)
4. Explain why a modern, professional warrior needs a code to navigate the moral complexities of war (C, D, E)

Weeks 15/16:

At the successful completion of this week, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze how asymmetric warfare challenges traditional military ethics requirements (E)
2. Distinguish between guerrilla tactics and terror tactics (D, E)

3. Apply moral deliberation strategies and just war principles to evaluate whether non-combatants can ever be intentionally harmed, and if so, to what extent (to include non-lethal force) (D, E)
4. Distinguish between different levels of conflict and consider the questions of justice in each (D, E)
5. Explain and analyze how cyber warfare challenges traditional military ethics requirements (D, E)
6. Analyze the ideology in terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS (E)
7. Analyze several moral dilemmas of modern conflict (D, E)

APPENDIX H. INTERVIEW WITH CAPTAIN RICK RUBEL, USN, SENIOR NE203 INSTRUCTOR

Interview conducted on 2 December 2021 at 1430 in Luce Hall at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

1. What is the origin of the NE203 course?

The course started in late 1990s; 1994 Congressional National Defense Authorization Act required service academies to teach ethics. Part of this was a reaction to USNA's 1996 cheating scandal. USMA and USAFA do more of a strictly philosophical course, but USNA wanted to establish a hybrid, applied ethics course. ADM Larson, when he was Superintendent, envisioned bringing in military practitioners to this course in addition to the course philosophers.

As Distinguished Military Professor of Ethics I tried to find a balance between the moral philosophy and the military application, to serve as a bridge between two worlds that may not understand each other all the time. I implemented the case studies into the course to make midshipmen think through the moral reasoning as the bridge between these two worlds.

I wanted to implement case studies that were actually plausible, that might actually happen to Junior Officers. I wanted to implement plausible case studies similar to what happened to me in my career.

I like the way the new pilot course is set up, and I like how the Moral Deliberation Roadmap grows throughout the weeks and connects them. But, not all the dots are connected in the course yet. The military side of the staff is struggling in determining how to teach the course.

2. Why was NE203 implemented into the USNA course curriculum?

3. How effective has the course been in preparing Midshipmen to face moral dilemmas at the Naval Academy and in the operating forces?

We give out anonymous surveys to the students to determine what they've learned. I will provide you with answers to these surveys. The students are saying that the course is really important to them.

4. What makes for an effective NE203 course period?

An effective course period puts midshipmen in the first-person of a case study. The exception to this is in some of the third-person cases, such as the Abu Ghraib case in "why do good people do bad things?"

5. What makes for a useful NE203 case study? What is an example of some of the most engaging and/or effective case studies?

A good case study puts a midshipman in a decision situation, where they have to think, “What would you do?” But, the instructor has to be able to counter that, and play devil’s advocate against that student’s plan. The purpose is for the midshipman to be able to defend their moral position. The two best comments for a midshipman to make is “I haven’t thought about that,” because it means the midshipman is learning, and also “Sir, can I change my answer?” Because it means midshipmen are listening to and considering alternative courses of action.

Midshipmen should leave the class frustrated that they don’t know the “right” solution to a situation. As an instructor I never told the midshipmen what I did, or what I would have done. Because I want the midshipmen to come up with what they would do themselves without leaning on my answer, and because I am not confident that I did the right thing in the actual situation.

We have way too many ground combat cases, but we need more shipboard or aviation cases.

We need all the services and numerous situations represented. They should not all be SEAL cases or ground combat cases.

Cases where a choice between wrong vs. wrong are good, because midshipmen have to make assumptions which they must state explicitly in class. It allows the instructor the opportunity to show midshipmen why they should examine the assumptions that they make. When you have wrong vs. wrong situations, midshipmen must identify and rely on their individual values to make the choice that they deem is morally right.

Can a case be used to go through the elements of critical thinking? A good case study would hit all of the critical thinking terms.

6. Is there room for change in the course curriculum?
7. Do you see conceptual gaps in the course curriculum? What are they?

One big gap—we cut out discussion of religion out of the new pilot course. If you leave this out, you leave out conversations related to people who value religion as a large segment of their personal moral philosophy. Talking about religion allows for the devout to see where there could be hard conflicts in their service between what they believe and what they may be ordered to do as junior officers.

We expanded Character to three weeks, which is great.

8. What concepts in the curriculum could use improved, or new case studies?

We don’t have a lot of cases that demonstrate the area of Constraints (dignity, respect). These are difficult, because how do you weigh the life of an innocent

combatant against one of your service members, for example? The Afghan sexual assault case is one that we use here, but it's almost too difficult to come up with a good solution in this case, which makes it a very difficult case to teach.

The "Constraints" section is pretty well-covered.

In Just War, we have 8–10 ground combat cases. Including cases from Black Hearts. Many of these are almost helpless war situations that are almost too difficult to teach. We should balance out the ground combat cases with cases from other communities. We have a number of cases on Tomahawks, collateral damage, and proportionality. These cases can present a real modern-day dilemma. For example, when a Tomahawk missile doesn't hit its intended target, who is responsible? The question of responsibility in modern day warfare is one that deserves attention.

We could use more case studies on cyber warfare. We have some, but they don't lead midshipmen through the deliberation of "what should we do?" Good cases would include questions of "how much confidence in attribution do we need to have to make a counterattack?" "Is responding in the physical battlespace an appropriate response to a cyber attack?"

Each case should make a point. We don't want just stories.

9. How does the NE203 curriculum stay relevant to Midshipmen? Is it updated regularly?
10. What was the thought process behind implementing the moral deliberation roadmap?

The value of the MDR is that it gives midshipmen a model to reflect how they think about ethical situations. I think it is a difficult model to apply. Models are only as good as how they are taught.

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APPENDIX I. INTERVIEW WITH CAPTAIN DOUG RAU, USN, SENIOR NE 203 INSTRUCTOR

Interview conducted on 10 November 2021 at 1300 in Luce Hall at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

1. What is the origin of the NE203 course?
2. Why was NE203 implemented into the USNA course curriculum?
 1. The course was implemented as a direct response to the 1996 cheating scandal. Congress, as a reaction, mandated in a defense spending bill that USNA would teach NE 203.
 2. There is a significant difference between what we do and what USMA/ USAFA do. They hired a bunch of philosophers; we hired a few, and paired them up with military instructors that could bring their experience to the midshipmen.
 3. The theme should be that the case studies are not applicable only to a certain instructor but rather there's almost a knowledge bank of case studies available to all. You don't have to be a SWO to understand the implications of "The Boat People" case, for example.
 4. The case studies bring military aspects to the principles we teach to help them make more sense to the midshipmen.
3. How effective has the course been in preparing Midshipmen to face moral dilemmas at the Naval Academy and in the operating forces?
 1. Just going off the Student Opinion forms, I think what you will find is that a large number of the students come away saying this was very beneficial for self awareness moving forward.
 2. I was also more than a little disappointed when a midshipman wrote down the honor concept verbatim on the final exam, and then cheated on the physics exam the next day. So there are some moral issues that stick.
 3. It's better than having nothing, but is it the full solution? No. Until we can get full acceptance in Bancroft Hall of the Honor Concept, then we won't have a full solution.
 4. A large number of midshipmen don't take notes. That's just not the way that I study... Many think "I already know how to be good." What we are hoping to give them are some additional tools so they can argue to themselves and others that they are doing what's right.

4. What makes for an effective NE203 course period?
 1. We give the philosophers a lot of latitude, and some philosophers talk to the mids for 50 minutes about the subject, some will start with a case study that is an example of the concept, but the case studies, to me, are the key.
 2. The case studies are what really make the concepts relevant to the midshipmen. That's why we need case studies that midshipmen can identify with, and that they can remember. Which is why you are doing this project.
5. What makes for a useful NE203 case study? What is an example of some of the most engaging and/or effective case studies?
 1. "Clouds over the mountain"- written by a predecessor. Good intro to moral deliberation roadmap. It's a warfighting scenario where you have clear instructions but you are personally being challenged by the scenario because there are consequences and obligations that are clearly impacted by the decision that you make.
 2. Issue of Moral perception - **Relativism** and the Afghan sex case. Could this be replaced? Is there a case where we can make it more relevant? Maybe a liberty case?
 3. The military is undergoing a shift from the Middle East to the South Pacific... So our service members may not be confronted by some of these cases again.. But what about events in the Philippines? Liberty in Thailand? Is an AOR change in order?
 4. Consequentialism - NE203 instructors talk about Hiroshima, and also they talk about Omelas. But as a junior officer, I had to make a decision—what's really good for the ship may have a significant impact on a smaller part of the crew. So you're asking a lot out of a small group, and you have to measure using consequential reasoning, what is the best thing to do? I could easily see what was good for the ship, could easily see the negative impact on the small portion of the crew, but could not see what they were experiencing through the impact. (i.e., the group that was going to buy bus tickets back to SD from Monterrey). How do you carry the depth of the negative impact on the small group in the command, as well as the positive impact on the command as a whole.
 5. Rescuing the Boat People - One of my Favorite stories because there's rationalization and socialization that can occur when working through it.
 6. When you're a JO and you see something that's wrong, and the command is not addressing it and you wonder if it's intentional or not, what do you do? What will be your course of action? A good example is the Haiti case,

where the actor follows through the steps of Rouschs Constitutional Paradigm.

7. Stories that ask, “What do you do?” are impactful.
6. Is there room for change in the course curriculum?
 1. Change in this course is several semesters out. We talk about it, prototype it, and vote on it.
 2. There are things that are left out that need more attention, specifically, divine command theory has dropped out of the course, but it’s part of the personal values and principles that we should spend more time on. What’s missing on Roush’s paradigm is family and faith. We don’t talk about these enough.
 3. Where does your faith fit with your military obligations? These are important conversations. There are a couple of professors who talk about ENS Izbecki, who graduates top of class, goes to graduate school, goes to submarine school, learns what the fleet ballistic missile system can do, and when he sees the frag pattern for the nuclear weapons; he says I can’t do that. Starts the long course of becoming a conscientious objector. It was a long process to argue from a faith POV that he couldn’t do that.
 4. It will be interesting to see what happens in the future with this COVID vaccination mandate.
7. Do you see conceptual gaps in the course curriculum? What are they?
8. What concepts in the curriculum could use improved, or new case studies?
 1. We could do a better job with Fat Leonard,
 2. We could and should bring back Tailhook.
 3. How do you put places off limits on liberty? Who makes those decisions? Who’s going to police those things, and is that right? In Thailand, we said the kickboxing is off limits DO NOT GO THERE and then you get sailors getting carried back to the ship because they think they can get in the ring with some 90 lb Thai guy who knocks them silly. How do you regulate their liberty to control their behavior? At what point does control end and trust-based autonomy begin?
9. How does the NE203 curriculum stay relevant to Midshipmen? Is it updated regularly?
 1. Start classes by asking “What’s going on in Bancroft Hall? What are the issues?” I’ll start this afternoon’s class talking about Space force since there was a Forrestal Lecture on it.

2. First paper in NE 203 is about roommate calling to request that the Mids sign them for TAPS. What do you do? Most Mids will talk about their loyalty to their roommates.
 3. Take a look at the XYZ cases, and consider the situations that they find themselves in where they have a decision to make, and they make the wrong one...
 4. But I do think, especially for Youngsters, that it could be useful for them to see things from a Midshipman perspective. They definitely need to see things from a Junior Officer perspective.
 5. The Rockwood and the Boat People cases...The actors in these cases had particular personalities that were different from the norm, that makes it harder for Midshipmen to see themselves in the scenarios themselves.
 6. Ensigns put tremendous faith in the command and the commanders.
10. What was the thought process behind implementing the moral decision roadmap?
1. As you consider case studies, you should start with the MDR, and look at the different parts of it to determine the aspects of it that are really hard. I.e. in this situation the consequences are so hard that it makes it difficult to make a decision. When you think about the Afghan sex case, the answer is very clear there. When you talk about consequences, that's where Hiroshima makes the answer very clear. Special obligations - Strabbing. Character- Fat Leonard. These are all so compelling, but what about cases where it's not very clear? I.e. Whitney Irby's case, where it's not quite as clear. Like Tailhook - Is this how you should be treating women in the military? Absolutely not. So why did you do it? Because everybody else was.
 2. Case studies that deal with cultural and/or social pressures... We don't have case studies that deal with that.
 3. [Read Clouds over the Mountains]
 4. COS for Space Force at a Forrestal Lecture gave 3 leadership principles - take leadership opportunities as often as you can; the third was be a good person. What in the world does that mean? It's important to try to figure that out... "I see you, I know you, I can trust you because I believe you are a good person..." What does that mean? Maybe there are some biographies that are worth reviewing quickly. What aspects of people in your life make them a good person.
 5. How do you determine what "Fair" is, and how are you going to accommodate what they and/or their families think is fair?

APPENDIX J. INTERVIEW WITH DR. MIKE GOOD, SENIOR NE 203 INSTRUCTOR

Interview conducted on 9 November 2021 at 0900 in Luce Hall at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

1. Why do you think NE203 is so important for the USNA core curriculum?
 1. Two things that I think midshipmen should get from the course - 1) the notion that there is such a thing as moral knowledge, and that they can find it; and 2) that they walk away with some practical strategies to shape their own character, that they can incorporate into their lives in order to become better people.
2. How effective has the course been in preparing Midshipmen to face moral dilemmas at the Naval Academy and in the operating forces?
 1. No actual good data besides self-reported anecdotal evidence. When midshipmen are out doing their jobs, how often did ideas percolate in their consciousness when they faced moral dilemmas? I'm a firm believer that what Mids take away from the course is — Chris, you remember your ethics instructor, J C (CAPT), and how he interacted with you, and how he coached you through these scenarios, and we hope that you model some of the things you observed from him. Midshipmen remember so much more about how we as faculty interact with them and how we treat them, than about what we teach them. If you really come to value and respect someone in their person, you'll remember what they taught you.
 2. We know they midshipmen are not going to remember a lot, so let's make a point of driving home the Moral Deliberation Roadmap so that at least they know the right questions to ask to find the morally correct answer.
 3. Lastly the concepts in the character week - Exposure to these virtues... the point of practicing is to teach midshipmen to do things that they will perform when called so that they don't even have to think about it. An example of this is the media fasting (spending a week without accessing one's favorite social media platform.) The point is to exercise the muscle so that midshipmen do recognize that they could/should do without it in certain instances, i.e., going straight to bed rather than spending an hour logged onto Instagram.
 4. People don't remember facts, they remember experiences.
 1. Narratives in stories - they're visceral and allow the midshipmen to *feel*, not just know, the moral concepts that they may face.

1. So, case studies where Midshipmen can see themselves in that situation can be useful.
 2. What case studies are needed: Ones that put the Midshipmen in the natural position of where they will be in the future, i.e. O-3 and below case studies. It would be helpful if they didn't feel contrived.
2. Do case studies need to be riveting?
1. I.e. my roommate is sleeping with XXX, what do I do?
 2. It may be helpful to do 4 to 8 interrelated vignettes.
 1. [idea: signing rosters]
 3. Ideas where you're pitting certain aspects against one another may be good. Where the MDR tells you to do something that is at odds with your character. How do I work out this weird tension between the social tensions and the morally right thing?
 1. Dr. Good: The brigade trains themselves to bend to the social pressure. An "Us vs. Them" mentality pervades, and there is a general concern among midshipmen with covering for each other.

What makes for an effective NE203 course period?

. Reflections in silence and solitude, assignments on forgiveness, during Stoicism (temperance) week, implementation of a "media fast." (Deleting favorite social media app for a week.) Helps midshipmen understand the depth to which the app manages one's life. Helps midshipmen gain practical knowledge of dependence that they may have on outside influences.

What makes for a useful NE203 case study? What is an example of some of the most engaging and/or effective case studies?

. Midshipmen favor personal stories. The ones that make the midshipmen feel this angst about what to do.

- a. Dr. Good: FC committing suicide story - Moral Injury
- b. Dr. Good: Running over the kid in the boat, kid from other ship, other ship had gundecked boat reports.
- c. Roger: 5th Fleet SOCOM Commander.
- d. Dr. Good's favorite case study: Love the ones we do at the beginning, because Mids think of themselves as good people and say, why do I need an Ethics class, and then

you hit them with the Afghan sexual abuse case study and they're like, "oh.. Wow. What do I do?" Another example is "The Boat People" case study. Dr. Good walks the midshipmen like puppy dogs down the story, does the math, leads them to decide to leave food for the refugees on the boat and keep going, and then he hits them with the actual result. Case studies that go Boom.

e. Case studies that involve the phrase "The JAG says...", where midshipmen might believe that moral absolution is possible as long as the JAG says a certain course of action is legal.

What concepts in the curriculum would be most in need of new case studies?

. "We have more infantry and SEAL-type case studies in the Just War block and in some of the other areas, so there are places we don't really have a Marine Corps or Special Forces perspective. There are lots of places where we don't have good representation from the Surface Navy.

a. In Spring 2015, the department started piloting a new NE 203 course which was approved in _____. There are now 4 blocks - 1) Moral Perception, 2) Moral Deliberation, (Dr. Skerker wrote 2 articles on rights and one on consequences; Chris Eberle wrote one on dignity.) (Moral deliberation roadmap has been implemented here.) 3) Moral Excellence/Character [5 week long block], covering Aristotle, Stoicism, virtues specific to the military, which is the professional community to which we send the Midshipmen. So pride and humility, temperance and self control, courage, and moral resilience are taught. [moral resilience is like the restoration of justice or the ability to respond to mistakes, talking about moral injury and how to recover, how to respond in ways that will prevent moral injury] 4) Just War block.

b. A case study on special obligations could be a good addition. When you struggle against two obligations, i.e., family vs oath; religion vs oath. Dr. Eberle wrote an article called "Faith in Love and War" which follows a Platoon Commander (Tim Strabbing), who was in the Battle of Fallujah. He refused to throw tank rounds through buildings; he was choosing to put his Marines at more risk in order to save more innocents. His superiors were frustrated with him even though it was in his purview to make these decisions. "My job is to bring Marines back, not murderers. I don't want to put them in a position where I send them home, not themselves."

c. We have a couple good Moral Injury cases, related to Marcus Luttrell, and the case study of someone shooting a woman in a burqa.

d. Courage week could use some help with case studies.

e. Self-control week could use some help with case studies. Someone who went off the rails because they couldn't control their desires or emotions well.

f. Midshipmen underestimate the strength that moral courage can have in reinforcing physical courage.

g. Proper pride/humility case studies would be good. We have good readings on the topic, but not so much any case studies that show any individuals who have appropriate levels of pride and humility.

h. “Military Virtues” - book. Could have leads for decent case studies.

i. Having a case study where students struggle through it is good for their development. Maybe having a sequel case portion could help wrap things up.

What’s most important for the NE203 curriculum to stay relevant to Midshipmen?

How can case studies better utilize the moral decision roadmap?

. Finding case studies to which the MDR can be applied are good case studies.

APPENDIX K. INTERVIEW WITH COLONEL MARIA PALLOTTA, USMCR, SENIOR NE 203 INSTRUCTOR

Interview conducted on 18 November 2021 at 1700 at Lemongrass, Annapolis, Maryland.

1. What is the origin of the NE203 course?

The course was implemented as a direct result of the electrical engineering cheating scandal from the Class of 1996—my class. Academy leadership did a full review of the Honor Concept, the result being a revised Honor Concept and the institution of the NE 203 course.

2. Why was NE203 implemented into the USNA course curriculum?

3. How effective has the course been in preparing Midshipmen to face moral dilemmas at the Naval Academy and in the operating forces?

There has not been any assessment effort to prove that this course has been effective. How do you really prove that ethics is effective anyway? By people not being put in the Brig? By another Fat Leonard scandal not happening? Maybe one could say that the reason all of those 1980s/1990s graduates got caught up in Fat Leonard is because we didn't have an ethics course at the Academy, but how do you know? Is causation correlation? Without assessments, I can't necessarily speak to this, but I will hear midshipmen and recent graduates say that it's one of the best courses that they took at the Academy. That's the feedback that I've gotten.

I took an ethics course in graduate school, but I had never studied it in undergraduate program. Having a basis for the philosophies of Kant and Aristotle and the Stoics would have been useful. I learned a little of Just War theory in Catholic school, but not much. I would have benefited from learning about these philosophical concepts but I didn't have that.

4. What makes for an effective NE203 course period?

We try to use the Socratic method in the course periods that the military instructors teach. Discussion is key. We may give a little bit of a lecture to review the concepts but the real value is the fleet applicability that the case studies bring, sharing an occasional sea story, and getting the midshipmen to participate. I am a humanities major, and am a big fan of facilitating a dialogue more than talking at my students.

Especially since so many of the concepts can be ambiguous, without a clear answer. Just today my class had a great discussion on collateral damage. Would

you take out a ball-bearing factory or other target of military value if there was a school nearby? What about attacking it at night, versus during the day? There is no clear, easy answer, so it leads to really good discussions.

You want the midshipmen to think. It's about their thinking process and their critical thinking. I need the midshipmen to be able to understand the concept, be able to summarize the concept briefly in writing for a short answer or essay, and then be able to apply it to a case study. Like the Doctrine of Double Effect, for example. That's really what the course is about.

5. What makes for a useful NE203 case study? What is an example of some of the most engaging and/or effective case studies?

I think a good case study is something that has real consequences, like the case study about the SH-60 that's lost at sea. You're the skipper, and you have a crew of officers on 5-minute alert who want to go and rescue their peers, but sending them out will break NATOPS and you're probably going to kill them too. Do you send them out? Knowing that you already have to talk to 4 or 5 families about their lost sons and daughters, are you going to send another aircraft out? That one really works because there is no easy answer. When you're a young officer, you want to get out there and do it but as a senior officer you realize, whoa, I am responsible for all of this. As I have grown into my age and my rank, I would be hesitant, but I know that as a young Lieutenant or Captain, of course you want to go out there and risk your life to save your buddies. So I think case studies are effective where there is not a clear answer, where a junior officer would maybe have a different opinion than a senior officer, and when there is real consequences. Not necessarily life or death, but, for example, fudging a document about your travel claim to get more money, where there are real consequences—You could lose your job, get a bad FITREP... Those make for really good cases.

Case studies shouldn't always be as high-stakes as life or death. Because if that's all the midshipmen see, then they will start to think that, Oh, unless I'm in combat or in a real dangerous situation, then I don't have to make ethical and moral decisions. No, you do. Every day.

There need to be some good moral courage case studies. There is no shortage of physical courage, but moral courage...that's the tough one.

For example, at TBS, one of my fellow lieutenants, who was an international lieutenant, wanted me to notarize his apartment lease, but there was something he had fudged on it. He asked me to sign it as a commissioned officer. We were friends, he was in my squad, but something struck me as shady about it. I politely told him no, but I think he just found someone else to sign it. It's hard, at that age, to tell your peers "no."

6. Is there room for change in the course curriculum?

There's always room for change and improvement, but the problem is getting a bunch of Ph.D philosophers to agree on it. Some things have been removed from the course that I liked. Like political philosophy, like *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill, all about the Harm Principle, which I think is really applicable to COVID and wearing masks. You might think it's your freedom but if you're harming others, it's not your freedom. And breathing on them could be harming others. I think the case studies should always be updated, constantly. Because they need to be more current. All our stories are for Iraq and Afghanistan which was really relevant for over a decade, but now, maybe not so much. We need to have other things in there. I think anything gets stale after a decade. I think the officers should have a nice pool of case studies to select. I like being able to write a little bit of my own syllabus; I don't need to be told what to teach. I like a little bit of that flexibility.

Currently, sometimes there's options. The course is fairly directed, but there are options because there are some other LEAD students who rewrote some new ones that we use, but then we still have CAPT Rubel's old ones from the old textbook, and we still pull those ones out.

7. Do you see conceptual gaps in the course curriculum? What are they?

I think that political philosophy, like John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*—we took that out, but there are moral issues about that. Mill was a consequentialist. The course went away from some of that classical theory in favor of more modern theory and case studies. We didn't use to teach the Moral Deliberation Roadmap, but they took out some of the readings to make room for it. They took out some of Kant too. Maybe it is because I am a humanities major so I like the historical theory. The thing is, the course is already jam-packed. I think a lot of the concepts go over the midshipmen's heads because they aren't old enough or mature enough. Some of that theory might be more graduate level, so maybe it's good that it was taken out. If we try to use too much of a fire-hose of information, it just doesn't work.

8. What concepts in the curriculum could use improved, or new case studies?

The concepts of moral courage could. Not all Junior officers are going to face life-and-death situations, but junior officers are always going to be faced with smaller moral decisions. Those are the ones that gets people fired. For commanders' it's always sex, booze, and money that gets them in trouble. It's usually one of those three things. Like Fat Leonard, for example. It was hugely embarrassing. There are so many Academy graduates who were involved, like ADM Gilbeau who spent a year in prison. So whatever we need to do to keep that from happening again. The prostitution, the money, the extravagant meals, the weekend-long benders with Dom Perignon, I mean... That's costing lives and careers as much or more than combat deaths. If you look at senior officers, very few senior officers are going to get killed, there weren't that many that got killed

in Iraq and Afghanistan. But look how many lost their careers and even their civilian freedoms due to prison time from Fat Leonard.

We have a case study that CAPT Rubel wrote about how one of the best, most knowledgeable higher-level staff officers working at the Pentagon was a woman. Do you take her on an official trip to Saudi Arabia or do you respect the fact that women don't have authority there? Well, of course you take her. But case studies like that are kind of a moot point because they are dated and not realistic anymore. There is another one about a female adjutant who stays late to work at her command, and the CO keeps hitting on her, but the XO tells her Don't worry about it, so she doesn't say anything, but when she finally does, all these other women from the command come forward, and they realize that the CO is predatory, and has been serially been doing that. And when you stay quiet, you don't realize that there are often others who have undergone the same treatment. That's a good one.

There need to be more cases involving diversity and inclusion. Involving sexuality, transgender service members, racial issues. There was a good case about abortion that we used to do, but it got taken out. The case boils down to, if you're personally against abortion, are you going to use your role as a commander to disapprove leave, to make this woman follow your views, even though it's legal, but you can easily justify it by saying, "no, I'm not going to give you more leave." It leads to an amazing discussion. So you could apply the same thing to other groups, like gay men in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps is an old-boy, Southern, conservative organization. It has more of that than the other services. So I think you can write a similar case study in which you have a gay Marine where the Commander has a decision to make, and in that way could influence the decision with his or her authority and really do a disservice to the Marine but hide behind their rank and authority to discriminate.

9. How does the NE203 curriculum stay relevant to Midshipmen? Is it updated regularly?

The curriculum just got updated. It needed an update. How does it stay relevant? By getting people with fleet experience, who have all had NJP authority, to give their perspective as instructors. But I think that case studies should constantly be updated to remain relevant.

10. What was the thought process behind implementing the moral deliberation roadmap?

They wanted to break down the process, use a flowchart, and maybe simplify it so that the midshipmen could grasp it easily. It's an easy way to tie in the theory.

APPENDIX L. INTERVIEW WITH ADMIRAL PAUL BECKER, USN, SENIOR NE 203 INSTRUCTOR

Interview conducted on 9 November 2021 at 1030 in Bancroft Hall at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

1. Why do you think NE203 is so important for the USNA core curriculum?
 1. There's an ethical/moral crisis in America at large. I'm 60 years old and I've seen the moral fabric of America from a very broad brush; I have less confidence now that Americans across the board are acting morally and ethically in all aspects of society.
 2. We, the USNA/military, are a bastion of strong morals and ethics. Plebe Summer is not enough; we need reinforcement through good squad leaders, company officers, and extracurricular activity leadership. NE 203 was not implemented as part of the course curriculum until the mid-90s. As a result of the Class of 1996 electrical engineering exam cheating scandal, Congress got involved, and determined that the service academies needed a course on ethics. Dr. Rick Rubel was involved in the course from the beginning.
 3. There is hard data available on which professions are the most respected and trustworthy in the U.S. Somewhere near the top is "military." (Bonus research - look it up and include it ("footnote it") in the research with SOMETHING RECENT.) We're always one cheating scandal or one Fat Leonard scandal away from this not being the case. The American trust in the military is fragile. We can't fall down to #2 or #3, we need to be #1.
 4. Midshipmen being morally/ethically stronger decision makers is good for national security.
 5. We need to reinforce morals when the sun is shining.
2. How effective has the course been in preparing Midshipmen to face moral dilemmas at the Naval Academy and in the operating forces?
 1. I don't know
 2. No anecdotal feedback.
 3. Fat Leonard case - unsure of the proportion implicated that were USNA Grads?
3. What makes for an effective NE203 course period?

4. What makes for a useful NE203 case study? What is an example of some of the most engaging and/or effective case studies?
 1. NE203 is not a course that is easy to fail. In three semesters, no one has gotten lower than a C. If you're getting Cs, I'm initiating extra instruction (EI).
 2. I don't always see midshipmen completing all of the assigned readings. It's rare to see the midshipmen taking notes in class.
 3. If a video is presented alongside a case study, midshipmen become more engaged than if only a written story is provided.
 4. I like to present a case study on Captain's Mast, involving a scenario in which two sailors miss ship's movement. I assign roles to the midshipmen in class to roleplay the scenario, and conduct class as though it were an actual Captain's Mast.
 5. I've stopped recommending books to midshipmen; I recommend videos instead.
 6. Reinforcing case studies with video or interactive play are effective ways to engage the midshipmen.
5. What concepts in the curriculum would be most in need of new case studies?
 1. We are now in an era of Strategic Competition against China and Russia. There were some pretty hair-raising incidents during Cold War regarding how to handle nuclear weapons use and deterrence, and how to leverage conventional weapons to prevent a nuclear strike. Might there have been an ethical or moral decision involved with the application of use of force? It's an area worth exploring.
6. What's most important for the NE203 curriculum to stay relevant to Midshipmen?
 1. New Lessons?
 1. Getting back to us!

How can case studies better utilize the moral deliberation roadmap?

. I'm a fan of the MDR's structure. Chances are if you're a Midshipman here, you've got some kind of moral/ethical upbringing. But there's a wide range of experiences of midshipmen coming to the Academy from different places. The Mids may think they know what's right, but they likely haven't thought about it through the use of a framework.

a. The framework is solid. With regard to the case studies, it's likely not the case that while they are being read while the reader is thinking, "Moral Deliberation

Roadmap.” I like the case studies because they’re good stories, and any Midshipman can relate to them regardless of where they came from.

b. So after going through a case study, the class can work through it using the Moral Deliberation Roadmap.

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APPENDIX M. NE 203 STUDENT FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

Focus group conducted at 1250 on 8 December 2021 in 4th Company wardroom. 8 3/C midshipmen participated. All midshipmen were enrolled in the NE 203 ethics course, which was in its final week at the time of the focus group.

What were some of the most memorable and/or impactful case studies that you were taught in NE 203?

Most memorable - The Boat People - The Captain's course of action was the same as what some midshipmen determined that they would do in the same situation. This turned out to be the wrong answer, and caused us to challenge our assumptions. Instructors put midshipmen in the hot-seat during this case study, asking them, *what would YOU do?* as though they were actually in the scenario.

Most memorable - Afghan Sexual Assault Case - Many midshipmen felt satisfied that the Afghani in this case was beaten up, but then the instructor questioned them on what good that did for the situation. Were the boys being molested any safer? How did it help the kids in the end? The case made the midshipmen realize that just because a solution gives a quick satisfying result doesn't always mean it makes an impact. Midshipmen walked away with a change of mindset about consequential decision making.

Most memorable - Deciding to send out the rescue helicopter in the storm. This case study featured a scenario that seemed like a no-win situation, where the result's of the decision that had to be made were not clear. Lots of uncertainty was involved. In one midshipman's experience, his instructor moved on quickly from the case which left the class feeling unfulfilled.

Most memorable - My Lai - Impactful because hearing the story outright, and hearing about the habituation of the troops who committed the murder, gave insight into their moral degradation.

What were some of the least impactful case studies?

Gundecking Paper, (Not a case study that's taught, but one that midshipmen have to work through in the form of an essay). You're the DivO of a ship, it's Friday, there's a big inspection coming up on Monday, your Chief comes to you saying the Division is not going to be ready in time but that it would be no big deal if you were to sign off on the checklist. Midshipmen felt that they were being shepherded toward one particular answer—bring the division back to work on the weekend, despite it being unpopular. One midshipman called such a situation "small potatoes." For that one, midshipmen said that they didn't have to deliberate too much about what the correct solution was. In fact, some said that they circumvented the process of thinking logically through the problem, in order to deliver the product that they believed their instructors expected to see.

One midshipman suggested, instead, to work through a situation where individuals do the unethical thing by placing blame on others or not taking responsibility, as in the Milgram Experiment.

The final essay, on perfidy vs. deception, was impactful because it made midshipmen really deliberate about what the “right” answer was.

One midshipman noted, it seemed redundant the amount of times that his instructor talked about Black Hearts.

What did you think about the interplay between the case studies and the philosophy lectures in NE 203.

-Midshipmen felt that philosophy classes were where requisite theoretical knowledge was delivered.

-One midshipman voiced the opinion that the class could have strictly studied case studies, with a similar result. He noted that his military instructor made every case study interesting because he would incorporate his own fleet experience in the discussion. This contrasted with the philosophy portion, where, i.e. Greek philosophy was discussed. This midshipman didn't feel that this was relevant.

-Another midshipman said, “I get lost in the philosophical theory, and feel like I learn the most when you can apply the philosophical theory to a real-world case.”

-Contrastingly, one midshipman found the philosophy portion so interesting that he ended up signing up for a subsequent philosophy elective, taught by his philosophy lecturer from NE 203.

-The majority of the midshipmen present agreed that having the two components was important because they complemented each other well.

-One midshipman noted, if military instructors did a small philosophical lesson at the beginning of the semester, and the rest of the time was spent on case studies, then he would have learned just as much from the course.

-One midshipman suggested that the philosophy lectures should occur once every two weeks.

How relatable are the case studies?

-The case studies are very future-focused, so it's easy to understand some of the moral and ethical decisions that we will encounter as officers, but it's hard to connect to the things that we have learned thus far.

-I had a USNA Battalion Officer as my instructor, and he always tried to tie in what was going on with the Brigade in Bancroft Hall to the lessons that we would learn in Ethics class. This was appreciated.

-One midshipman noted that the Abu Ghraib case study was relatable because it demonstrated how moral degradation can spread downward to the lower levels of leadership.

What was the Biggest Impact that the NE 203 Course had on you?

- One midshipman noted, case studies served as a reminder to reflect on her thought processes before doing or saying anything. All the gray areas reminded her to take a moment and see the whole picture of a situation before making a decision.
- The readings were really impactful. I.e. the book excerpts (Marlantes).
- We talk in my class about how the biggest part of the Moral Deliberation Roadmap is character. But we talked about how a lot of the people featured in the case studies never took an ethics class like we do at the Academy. I think that your character is developed early on, by your parents, or based on how you grew up. The ethics class here is good for giving everyone a level playing field, but I don't think it had a major impact on how I thought about ethics. It gave me tools and general knowledge that will help me out more in the future, but ethical decision making has to come from within. If you find yourself making wrong decisions, it has to be your own will that might force you to change. There should be more emphasis on active reflection, consciousness, and how morality goes into your daily life.
- Reflection papers are short, but there are so many guidelines that the midshipmen had to follow that they felt they had to write a bunch of fluff in order to fulfill the assignment requirements. A more free-form reflection assignment could be more useful, one that had fewer constraints.
- One midshipman said, the reflection papers required 300 words, but I felt like I could have written 700 words if I had actually had the ability to reflect more freely.

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APPENDIX N. INTERVIEW WITH DR. MICHAEL IZBICKI

Interview conducted on 3 March 2022 via Zoom. Below is a transcript of the recorded interview generated using dictation software. The transcript was edited slightly for punctuation and clarity.

Goodale: Okay. So I have a list of questions, compiled to kind of go off of. But I mean, the point of this is, you went through the NE 203 ethics [0:00:37] course, when you were at the Academy. It was obviously a while ago and I don't know how it was back then. But when I went through in 2015 or so it was very case study driven, using case studies as an opportunity to get at some of the the real moral and ethical questions that future officers should be asking. And so I'm [00:01:07] really glad to be talking to you and that you have some enthusiasm for turning your story into a case. Because like I said, in the email, I really think that it could make an impact on on some Youngsters who are on the brink of deciding, you know, whether or not to sign their two-for-sevens. Even I remember when I was going through and I signed my two-for-seven. So I think, you know, we [00:01:37] don't always quite know what we're getting into. And so for me I again, this is kind of hopefully an opportunity to be able to provide just a bit more perspective for Youngsters in thinking about whether or not this path is right for them. And and so yeah, I have questions, but as much as you just want to share of your experience, and of [00:02:07] the things to add as you think of this becoming a case study that you would want. Brought out moral issues your perspectives that I might not even be considering as the writer. If you bring us to light, then we can make something of it.

Izbicki: Yeah. Okay. As you're working on the case study itself, I'd be happy to review it or look at it after you're done with it.

Goodale: Absolutely, sir. I [00:02:37] will certainly be providing that to you as an opportunity and what I like to do too is at the very end before publishing just give you the opportunity, because it is your story, give you the opportunity to review it and make sure ultimately that what is published as something that you feel is accurate to you. And that

we're not speaking for you in any way that doesn't reflect your, [00:03:07] your story and your reality, at the end of this particular interview to what I would like to do is, ask you maybe some references of other individuals who are involved in your in your story that could add perspectives similar to or different from yours, right? To really give the case, a kind of a multidimensional feel to it. So yes, okay, excellent. So, I'm going to pull up these questions that I have. [00:04:07] I'm just going to start by asking. What was your What was your upbringing like?

Izbicki: So I grew up in a family that had a reasonably strong military background. Both my grandparents served in World War Two. One Army, One, navy a bunch of more distant relatives as well in the military and grew up right next to Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. I remember when I was [00:04:37] doing, YMCA basketball, as like a middle schooler an elementary schooler. A lot of my coaches were like Marine Corps, Gunnery sergeants and we'd go after basketball practice to the shooting range with them. So it was like a lot of like military exposure growing up. I don't think there's any like pressure [00:05:07] expectation. That I would be in the military, but Our September 11th happened. I was a sophomore in high school, at that time, maybe a freshman. That I think kind of crystallized for me and like somehow there's a lot of things that are wrong in the world. And I want to be I want to take that as a responsibility on myself, somehow trying to fix it or and the military since that seems like the natural way to do it to me at the time. [00:05:38] Today, I think I was applying to colleges applied to all the military academies. And when I applied to a bunch of other schools to the other schools, mostly thinking that I'd be doing like a ROTC program. I went to so I was pretty convinced that I wanted to be in the like a military officer coming out of high school.

Goodale: So in the New York Times article that was that was published on you, and then also I think in, I read in your first application. You [00:06:08] spoke about growing up attending a non-denominational church. And I think it was maybe a little bit kind of into your adolescence. Can you kind of speak to that? How you got into church? Kind of your religious background with your family and how that kind of played along with your decision to go to the Academy.

Izbicki: Yeah. Some parents grew up that Catholic, mom, Protestant and [00:06:38] I guess as a kid they decided that would be a Protestant family and I have memories up to like maybe six or seven going to church with them. And then for whatever reason, we stopped until I was in high school and I know quite a friend introduced me to this nondenominational church is again, sort of like right next to the camp Pendleton's. A lot of people there were either Marines or veterans somehow and [00:07:08] So I say there was a lot of encouragement from my church, like especially after the September 11th stuff of this is the way that you serve and make the world a better place is by going into the military. So again, I wouldn't say it was like pressure that there was an expectation that I would do that. But it was definitely like a very supporting path and a lot of encouragement

Goodale: and then I think I recall in one of the [00:07:39] perhaps it was in your Ted Talk, you sat down with a pastor, who talked about some of the challenges of being in a military environment and being a Christian. What was that conversation like?

Izbicki: Yes, it was my youth pastor at this church, and it was probably like a junior at this time. He had been a [00:08:09] he was enlisted in the Marines. And had been out for a number of years and I remember him sharing his experience as a Christian and that the things that were hard for him were mentioning that there's just a lot of cursing. And that that was something that just like a church as a policy wanted to avoid. And then a lot of sexually [00:08:39] inappropriate things. And there's never any, like, talk about whether the killing aspect was something that would be hard as a Christian or Justified as a Christian. And I guess I wouldn't say like maybe justifies not the right word for any of that. It was all just like what are the when you're there, what's hard? What makes life hard as a Christian.

Goodale: Sure. And so [00:09:09] kind of capping off the pre academy part. Did you ever think about that kind of on your own or in other conversations?

Izbicki: No, I had honestly, never even occurred to me that somebody might be either against war or against us like involvement in particular. Yeah, so I think, but we obviously just invaded Afghanistan. Gearing [00:09:39] up for the invasion of Iraq and so there were conversations in the news about whether this particular war was just or the right

policy move for the United States, but it wasn't even on my radar. That somebody might think that there are alternatives or the just war is off the table.

Goodale: Sure. And so is it accurate to say that the main feeling, before going into the Naval Academy is like a sense of just excitement for the future, and for service?

Izbicki: Yeah, [00:10:09] very much.

Goodale: okay. Great. My next question is, what made you decide to attend the Naval Academy, but I think we pretty much covered that, which is good. So, and then from your family, just to kind of cover all the bases. Are, you family seemed pretty supportive, your of your choice to join the military. And was there, it was there any perception of concern or assistance from from them at all?

Izbicki: I think just sort of the normal like fears, especially for my mom [00:10:39] sending her son off to the Navy.

Goodale: I get that. Yeah. Okay, so, can you just speak to generally your time with the Naval Academy? I gather a bit about how that ended up and your quite a good class [00:11:09] rank, but I just kind of want to hear more about your perspective of your four years there.

Izbicki: Let's see, it's a long time ago. The yeah, so I did computer science at the Naval Academy. Actually. I started thinking I was going to do electrical engineering but I had already taken some CS courses. So they kind of let me start [00:11:39] the sophomore courses, my freshman year, which motivated me to do CS. I really liked the all the CS classes and professors that I took there because I'm thinking a lot more on the academic side right now because that's like my job now is right? As a professor. So that's where I'm first going. [00:12:11] You know, so I remember in Plebe summer maybe like, two thirds of the way through, they were like, kind of assignment to write a letter home or something. And I remember writing back and like, talking to my mom about how hard Plebe summer was, but being very convinced that this was the right place for me. And I guess [00:12:41] at that point, I probably went to the shooting range or something at that point, but it's still not really. Like you're not talking about the necessarily military things but caring like the hard aspect of Plebe summer. I recall Plebe year being pretty hard for me. Not

academically. I think I did fine academically, but just all of the the weird rules, it's a big adjustment for me and [00:13:11] having to follow all those.

Goodale: What about socially? Like who any types of midshipmen you'd hang out with or what ECAs were you involved with?

Izbicki: So Plebe Year? I was in crew. Okay, stopped that like halfway through and then joined the Fencing Club and did fencing [00:13:41] the rest of my time there. I'd say that outside of my company, that was probably all. The main group of friends that I had,

Goodale: Which company were you, by the way?

Izbicki: 27

Goodale: Okay, nice. Back shaft.

Izbicki: Yep, the bottom floor, never had to go all the way up to the top. Yeah. [00:14:15] Let's see. So, I mean, I remember one of the things that was maybe socially a dividing thing between me and a lot of the other midshipmen at the time was my Christianity in certain ways that I would definitely group myself hanging out more with the other Christian midshipmen and in particular because of the sort of conversation that I had with that [00:14:46] junior high pastor that we were talking about before like the sexual sort of things especially. Also, the attitudes toward alcohol. I don't know that we talked about that with that other person, but I was something that the Naval Academy pastors talked about a lot was that as Christians we are supposed to be the examples for moderation with alcohol to other [00:15:16] non-Christian midshipmen. Another big social group for me was that the religious aspect. I don't think maybe like first part of plebe year I started attending the chapel on the Academy. But they at [00:15:46] least at the time they had a policy where on Sundays plebes could go off for off campus for religious Services, so that's probably why I decided to start going with some other people off campus. There's a couple of religious clubs at the time. I never got involved in those like Navigators or any others.

Goodale: So [00:16:16] when you say you were involved in crew, is that its

Izbicki: crew, not campus Crusades, the rowing team.

Goodale: Okay, good clarification. Okay - got it.

Izbicki: For a little while I was going to a Catholic club, actually, maybe second class a year that there was an [00:16:46] Air Force exchange student who I spent a lot of time with and she invited me to go there. So, spend a lot of time. I was gonna get to that. I think kind of yeah, okay. That's probably like, a little bit on the I don't want to add what I wouldn't say that I was like [00:17:16] jaded, but I was definitely feeling like the rules were more than they needed to be at the Academy and particular, like, so I remember like as a plebe one of the things that were supposed to memorize like memorizing, the like the chow calls, one of the things we were supposed to Do at the time for one of the weeks was memorize. The like the number of ships that are the different [00:17:46] ships names and their arsenals. And it felt to me like this is what we should be doing every week. Like, why am I memorizing sports articles or something most weeks when I came here to be a war fighter? And I want to memorize the like it's been a year and I don't even know what the ships are that we have in the Navy. That seems like hmm. Yeah, that's what I should be spending my time on. So I think like to the extent that I was may be [00:18:16] resistant to the rules of the, the Naval Academy. It was because I thought they were not preparing me to be the like that Warfighter sort of person that I want to be. Okay. That's everything [00:18:46] that's coming to mind off the top of my head.

Goodale: Sure. So I kind of want to tap into a couple of things you said. So it sounds like you kind of wended between a couple of different religious groups really so plebe year went off the Yard, went to the Catholic midshipmen club or some kind of Catholic Organization for a bit. It sounded like a I think you've mentioned like Youngster year, third-class year went to the chapel, [00:19:20] Which to Me, Maybe indicates some religious exploration or what's kind of the underlying development like religious development or kind of Christian? Development. You think was going on back then

Izbicki: so the like the church, that I'd grown up with back before the Navy, I think. [00:19:50] So, they're like, understanding of nondenominational. Was that like, if you're a Christian, you're a Christian and the like the denominations are just sort of like they're to divide us and more focused unity. And so when I was a sort of participating in the different clubs and churches, there was a Baptist Church that I was going to off the yard. I

guess I didn't. I'm just a little bit like an exploration of just saying, here's what the different practices [00:20:21] Christianity look like, but didn't see that as necessarily like questioning my faith or anything. That seems like a natural part of just like embracing the unity of, of Christianity. Okay, I'd say, like, I don't know, a major struggle for me, religiously at this time was We've been reading Charles Dawkins the [00:20:51] famous atheist can't think of the name of some of his books. But basically the idea that if evolution is true, he's a biologist then that how can Christianity be true and all of the and then other things he bring up is like all the different atrocities associated with. With religiousness and Christianity, in particular, like, Crusades and Witch, Trials, and things like that. [00:21:21] And if all of those bad things are associated with Christianity, how can I be associated with Christianity?

Goodale: Are you saying that'st he author's perspective or that was something that big was becoming your perspective as well?

Izbicki: So that was his perspective, and I found his at least, At first, I found his Arguments really challenging to me. Like, it makes sense everything that he's saying. And how can I reconcile that with, [00:21:52] with my own personal beliefs? So, yeah, this denominational church I grew up in PCC Pacific Christ church. They were very much of a stance that like the Earth is 6,000 years old, and if you believe in evolution, then I guess that was a dividing line for them. Then you really can't be Christian, if you believe in evolution and like it's if any word in the Bible is not to be taken, literally, then [00:22:23] you may as well, throw the whole thing out. So the whole Bible is literal so that was a major struggle for me, was reconciling this atheism, which the arguments were really making sense to me with Christianity

Goodale: Because, was it the case that you were bringing in those kind of tenets of the PCC's belief system, as it were, into the Academy, and then being confronted with Dawkins' points, is that the kind of reconciliation?

Izbicki: Yeah, exactly.

Goodale: Okay. And so how did that manifest was it kind of passive or did you really you know spend time on it or?

Izbicki: Yes, so I was a pretty voracious reader while I was at the Academy, probably read one to two books a week. [00:23:24] And so just reading like lots of those things. That's how I kind of wrestled with that. Not sure how I stumbled upon the books by Dawkins, but after that, I just kept reading about different things related somehow to that. I don't think I ever had any serious conversations with the naval chaplains or the out in town chaplains about this, but I would have with my with [00:23:54] a friend groups that I was going to church and stuff with. So another part of that religious development. One of the Summers coming back home. This probably be the [00:24:24] summer before. First class year, the Dead Sea Scrolls happened to be in San Diego at the Museum's, and I went with a friend who was in the Coast Guard to go see them and that had a pretty profound impact on me of like, Just, I don't now, seeing some objects that were 3,000 years old. Like you can actually Trace different [00:24:54] aspects of Christianity back to this, this time period. And so yeah, senior year, spent actually a lot of time on my own studying Hebrew based on that and I think the final reconciliation that I had with the problems with Dawkins in the atheism was that these [00:25:24] sort of things that he was challenging about Christianity, to me. They didn't seem like really the root of Christianity or the historical aspects of it. They seemed like things that were somehow centuries or Millennia later like getting corrected out of Christianity. So, The evolution, even in the 300 AD, the authors at the time were saying that they don't take Genesis [00:25:54] literally. And so now, when I'm at my church at PCC, that doesn't make sense that that has to be a core tenet of my faith anymore.

Goodale: You talking about presently or

Izbicki: Yeah. Okay, and so, I think for me, probably sometime in that like, first class Last year was, when I started thinking about like what does it really mean to be a Christian? And how do you? And I guess [00:26:24] at that point. I was starting to think like there's some like root things of Christianity established two thousand years ago, and then there's probably a lot of other like correct that's been added on to it. But didn't really have a sense of like, what that was or At that point, just that, that was important to me to explore.

Goodale: Okay. So switching gears [00:26:54] a little bit and circling back, we talked about how you took NE 203 which is the ethics class. Generally. What do you remember about the course?

Izbicki: Yeah remember a lot of the case studies. Like you were talking about. The case studies seemed more to me about Like, okay, you're a junior officer on your ship and either your subordinate does something bad or [00:27:24] maybe one of your peers do something questionable. And how do you respond to that? It was a lot more like In the moment sort of things rather than big picture things. I remember we probably had at least one lecture going over like just Just War theory in general, big picture that I've ever that would've been my first exposure at all to any of those sorts of [00:27:55] philosophical sort of things about war, but even then, it had never occurred to me, or it never came up in the class that there might be somebody who thinks that war is just an inappropriate thing to engage in. It was just somehow assumed that war is something that is going to exist. We're going to have to take part of it. And so how do we do it? How do we take part in it in the best way possible?

Goodale: [00:28:25] Okay, and is that you say it was assumed is that an assumption that you felt that you held personally?

Izbicki: I certainly held that personally, it very well could be the case that the professors were not trying to convey that and that was what I was hearing. But that's what I took away from it.

Goodale: Okay, great. Do you remember discussing the idea of the Constitutional Paradigm? So it's like the separation of powers. It's like Constitution mission service ship shipmate self, right? The order of loyalty for service members. What perspective if any do you remember when you encounter that concept?

Izbicki: I remember that made total sense to me. Actually I think at one point [00:29:25] the Naval Chaplain was sort of building on that concept and they put sort of at the top of that, here's God at the top and then my other things following from that, okay, and That also made sense to me because I felt like my desire to serve and serve my country,

serve my Shipmates, all of these things, following that that line ultimately stemmed from a [00:29:55] desire to serve God. And So I liked that framing.

Goodale: Okay, I want to kind of pause at this at this point because we so I'm in I'm in a master's program right now. And we basically took an ethics course that kind of mirrored with the midshipmen took. So I got it all again as we all prepare to become company officers, but in one [00:30:25] of the Aspect of the Constitutional Paradigm that my instructor highlighted specifically was Constitution missions service ship shipmate self. Two, big aspects, family, and also religion, or God are not specifically mentioned in that as stated by Roush, [00:30:55] Who is the author of that. And so, my instructor really kind of made a point of that. Like, how does one reconcile You know, if we take an oath to the Constitution, right? And an oath to abide by this constitutional Paradigm, that is an oath. But, marriage is an oath as well and, you know, to some extent religion. It certainly in my mind is an oath like commitment. And so you have these [00:31:25] Oaths and how do you really balance them? Which again, stepping back to the Ten thousand foot view of this case study is one of. I think that the real elements to get at here is, you know, when a midshipman, or when a service member encounters that juxtaposition, like, how do you reconcile that? But so, then turning it around to what I'm hearing from you and your experience sounds like, you've got the, the Constitution down to self [00:31:55] part of the Paradigm from your ethics class, but then you also had a separate encounter or interaction with some of the, the chaplains one, or more on the yard, who framed it, who kind of, added it with, putting God at the top. Is that, is that accurate?

Izbicki: Yeah. I'm trying, I don't have like a memory of us where I saw that with God at [00:32:25] the top but somewhere some point. I have a memory of a PowerPoint slide with, that says God at the top. So it was like a formal thing that somebody Did at some point.

Goodale: Interesting. Do you think it would have been at all part of the actual curriculum?

Izbicki: It could have been, I don't know.

Goodale: Okay. I appreciate you talking about this point because this is pretty key. Because then, your construct going forward it seems like [00:32:55] was that for you, God was at the top when for, you know, experiences may vary, mine being a case in point were, for others, they may be left to kind of work through that on their own. Okay, great. This is really good stuff. So next question. Was there any discussion during the course on the morality of killing in combat? [00:33:25] So you talked about just War Theory, you know, whether or not it's just to go to war and then just acts to take in war any other impressions. The more perspectives from that?

Izbicki: Yeah, it definitely came up the, the book on killing. I think it's called. Yeah, and so, like the psychological impact of killing on the person who's doing the killing, [00:33:56] but I guess that's still seems different to me than like understanding whether that Or understand the impact of killing different from questioning, whether the killing should be done in the first place.

Goodale: Sure. So the psychology and the morality or separate issues is what you're saying.

Izbicki: Yeah.

Goodale: Okay. All right, any other thoughts on that? [00:34:26]

Izbicki: The other course that I thought a little bit about to trying to think back is there was a law course that we required to take at the time.

Goodale: Law for the junior officer. I think you probably took it during your firstie year?

Izbicki: I think so. Yeah. I vaguely remember that I think at some point we talked about like Rules of Engagement and that course and so it sort of touched on those issues. But, [00:34:56] you know, definitely been the ethics course that was more related to these issues.

Goodale: Hmm. Okay, so, could you talk to me about your decision and path to become a submarine officer while at the Naval Academy?

Izbicki: Yeah, so of the, [00:35:26] I guess the sort of warfare that I most saw myself, being involved with was electronic warfare somehow. So, I did a summer at the NSA, and that seemed like a particularly good way to be achieving whatever objectives were trying to achieve with minimum casualties and things like that. And so submarine seemed like the [00:35:56] most natural fit in order to have my career being sort of along those lines of getting into the like most technological aspects of warfare. I think, yeah when I when I first joined, I had no particular, I knew I wanted to be in the Navy as opposed to Army or Air Force but didn't really have any sense of like how that would look. So it's probably [00:36:26] still like firstie year still kind of wrestling with that up until the actually putting in the preferences.

Goodale: Okay. And so yeah and just to be clear, you did put It in submarines as your number one choice. Okay, what did you know? So what did you know about at the time, the submarine community's involvement in the use of nuclear warfare?

Izbicki: I [00:36:56] mean, I knew that I'm sure I'd seen about like the nuclear Triad before some at some point in the Naval Academy and I guess to me at the time it just seemed like okay, if you're, if you're willing to use like, I got and then you're going to use a bomb and if you're going to use a bomb, then you're willing to use a big bomb. And so if it didn't seem problematic at all.

Goodale: So at the time that difference and type [00:37:26] of Warfare type of weapon didn't seem There wasn't necessarily any significance in as you said in using a nuke versus a rifle, Etc. Okay. So up until [00:37:56] graduation. Did you did you have any doubts about your role in Warfare or willingness conducts, you know, those duties?

Izbicki: Not at all. I think I at some point stop agreeing with the Iraq war politically. But yeah, that whole like constitutional Paradigm. They were talking about like still totally on [00:38:26] board with that, and that's my duly elected leaders. That's, that's what's going on right now. And so, that's my place in the world is to is to participate in that.

Goodale: Sure, okay. You pursued a master's degree at Johns Hopkins. I think through VGEP. Is that correct? So you did some coursework in the spring semester of you

firstie year and then you continued that through the summer and the fall and then you graduated by that winter?

Izbicki: Yep.

Goodale: Okay. What informed your decision to pursue that degree?

Izbicki: Mostly just that, I was really head of schedule academically, basically had finished everything by the end of junior year that I needed to graduate. And so sort of did a double major in math, first semester of the senior year and then than VGEP afterwards just because it was available. [00:39:26] Not really think any more about it than that.

Goodale: sure. So when you were in grad school. Were there any changes in your views, on your, your faith, and or your duties, as a Navy officer?

Izbicki: Maybe one story before grad school, like at the actual convocation ceremony, from graduation I remember there was like a [00:39:56] separate religious ceremony. That happened in the chapel. And the chaplain as part of their sermon was saying about how one of the reasons that he's a Christian and that all of us should be Christians is because it makes us a better naval officer. And, [00:40:28] and to me, especially like, going back to that constitutional Paradigm. What they got at the top that seem backwards to me. That it seemed like I was a naval officer because I was trying to serve out live out my Christianity, and that he was proposing at the other way, that He was a naval officer first. And then the Christianity is helping him be any better naval officer. So I remember like just something about that didn't sit right to me, and they there was some [00:40:58] like scroll or document, they had us wanting us to sign to be a part of that. And because I didn't sit right with me. I didn't go up and sign it. Okay. I still felt fine about It the being the naval officer part, but just that frame frame of it and didn't seem right to me

Goodale: before before that. Would you have been willing to sign it? Was that kind of like

Izbicki: [00:41:28] Well, I think it's somehow like signing up with saying that I was putting my service before God is how I felt like it was presented and that's why I didn't want to sign it.

Goodale: Interesting. Okay. I actually know the document. I think it's in Mitscher behind King Hall, I think it's actually like viewable.

Izbicki: I'd be really curious at some point to see how my memory matches up with what it actually. [00:41:59]

Goodale: Yeah well, when I get a minute, I'll go by now. I'll take a look and I'll see right behind me, curious as well.

Izbicki: Okay,

Goodale: anything else with your time at Johns? Hopkins? Development?

Izbicki: Yes, and so, there was four or five months between that and still at Johns Hopkins. It's a like, at least for me the [00:42:29] The Masters work was pretty light. So I had a lot of spare time. All my friends had basically moved away and doing other things. So I mostly kind of spent that time again, like, reading and doing the I still sort of is the religious question that was in my mind at this point. Was like, how can how do Christians reconcile with this like atheism [00:43:01] challenge? And so that was a lot of reading about that and I'd say I think probably at some point during that time is when I like, so trying to figure Like this difference between like a basically. Should I be a Christian or should I be an atheist? When I first encountered the idea that they were Christians who? Who opposed war and in all its forms. [00:43:31] And I think that idea of really started to resonate with me at this point because it seemed to make sense of all of the things that the Dawkins was complaining about Christianity for that. All of the things that he was complaining about seemed like things that were again. These sort of, like off shoots or somehow. Not like Crusades, [00:44:01] obviously, an example of war that Christians have participated in. And so I definitely would have wouldn't have thought of myself as a pacifist like reading those. But they're like I started to get more sympathetic to or just being aware that that was the thing that existed.

Goodale: Sure. And this was this was while you're at Johns Hopkins or and

Izbicki: okay.

Goodale: [00:44:32] and, So, okay, so to continue on just to build at the Timeline because now we're getting into a bit of areas where I'm not quite sure what the submarine pipeline is. Exactly a kind of a rough me because I have seen friends and classmates and roommate gone through it. But so you graduated from Johns Hopkins, that would have been what winter of 2008.

Izbicki: And then you

Goodale: did, you go directly [00:45:02] down to Charleston.

Izbicki: And that's,

Goodale: that's if I am correct on my knowledge that's called sobic submarine, officer

Izbicki: basic school. That's a different thing. That's so big, something I also did but that's up in Connecticut. Yeah, ground. There's a

Goodale: nuclear going to nuclear power school for. Yeah, okay. Nuclear power school. Okay, [00:45:32] and then you went to answer nuclear. Power school is how How long was that?

Izbicki: It's divided up into two six months periods. And in PTC p and NP T you or the the to two different commands. And so I started at the first ones, like just here's all the book knowledge for for power school. And then the second ones, you're on a submarine docked to port and operator [00:46:02] for six months.

Goodale: Sure, man, and that's all I'm Charles. And and then time again continuing the timeline direct transition from that to gratin.

Izbicki: Yeah, to so big. Okay.

Goodale: So now that we've built out the timeline, I seem to recall in one of the, I think it was maybe your Ted talk with you. You talked about engaging with chaplains at

either of those commands and how they presented to you. The [00:46:32] Christian pacifist movement as a movement. Can you speak to

Izbicki: that? Yeah, so I remember just being out on a run at one of the, there's the First Command that empty TCP and happening to run into one of the chaplains and talking to him for a little bit. We didn't talk about any of the religious stuff, but [00:47:02] I think that'd be me. Just really comfortable with him, get to know him. And so later on. I just walked into his office and said that I'm feeling uncomfortable about like the trajectory that my career is going on and wanted to talk to him about it. And and so he was the one who reached into his file somewhere and [00:47:32] said there's this thing called conscientious objection, which I hadn't heard about it that point and suggested that I look into it.

Goodale: Okay, and was this chaplain was eating Charles Turner gotten

Izbicki: Charleston?

Goodale: Okay. So in Charleston about about generally, we're in the year-long process, just

Izbicki: wrote it sometime in the beginning, like march/april ish

Goodale: and okay, and

Izbicki: so,

Goodale: Were there [00:48:02] aspects

Izbicki: about

Goodale: your training pipeline or the submarine Community specifically or nuclear warfare specifically like that. Were that were kind of an impetus in that thought. I've of where your trajectory was

Izbicki: going. So another sort of like key moment was [00:48:33] you have to take a psychological test as part of the training and a lot of questions on it. But one of them is about like would you turn the key to launch a nuclear missile or something like that? And Arms, I think at the time really, what I remember, so it's not the time said, no. And I think at first when I was really struggling with was [00:49:03] like, whoever's in charge of

actually like pushing the button launching, the missile has no idea about like, why that Like, what why that's happening? Even like, I mean, there's a lot of trust in all of these procedures that it's a valid order, and I don't even know like what those procedures are yet at this point. So, how can I trust those procedures? Right? [00:49:33] And yes, I don't even know if those questioning like, I don't know. I'm sure there was some moral element, but also just like how do I even know that? That's, I'm supposed to the thing that I'm supposed to be doing as part. My duty to do that, so I ended up having cycle off like meeting with a psychologist about that. And I think I probably met with the chaplain sometime around the same time was meeting with [00:50:03] the psychologist. I don't think, I don't think anything in particular came from meeting with the psychologist that they just kind of said. These are normal things to be wrestling with. Some of you have probably felt kind of unsalted satisfied with that. And so, I sought out the chaplain because of that.

Goodale: So you saying you saying, no to that question? Was that how big of like a red flag for the command was that or kind of an issue with with, like Isaac? [00:50:33] Do you know, if it's common for people to say no to that or

Izbicki: so, I know there were maybe, like, 200 people going through the pipeline at the time, there were three or four of us, who got referred to the The psychologist. Okay. I have no idea why the other people were so I guess it couldn't have been that common the it wasn't a red flag at all for the command that like, the, the psychic psychologist. Said that, [00:51:03] like our conversation stays here and nobody ever brought it up with me again after

Goodale: that. So, nobody treated you any differently for answering that particular question. Okay. Okay, so you just kind of Kick carried along, carried on with your, with your training at this point, with no impact administratively or anything, but still while questioning, [00:51:33] you know, kind of your views met. You said you met with with a chaplain introduce you to the idea of conscientious objection. So, where does that then develop from from

Izbicki: there? Yes, the kept chocolates recommendation was that he gave me the application and said, just think about it for a while and see if it's something that fits right

to you. And [00:52:04] so that's what I did and it was so I left the graduated from the First Command went to the second one, and it was not sure like exactly. We're in that process. I decided like, okay, I have to submit this but it was at the second command that actually submitted the application. Okay?

Goodale: [00:52:34] Okay, and we'll before we kind of get into the next part of that timeline because that I think that's going to be rich as you're going through and PTC p and NP T. You, so you mentioned earlier in the interview, you know, we need the academy, the idea of using a nude versus a conventional bomb, versus rifle, was kind of one of the same. Did that particular view change as you, for example, encounter this question in the test? [00:53:04] Or went through, learn more about the weapon systems.

Izbicki: I don't think that view really ever has changed for me. And so I think I may be one of the things that was sort of problematic was that. I started questioning the use of these really big weapons like nukes and that in turn, sort of cascaded down to make me question that use of everything else. The okay. Okay, if it doesn't make sense for me to use a nuclear weapon. [00:53:34] And why does it make sense for me to use a conventional weapon? That's almost as big as a nuclear weapon? Where should that dividing line be? Eventually. The only thing that made sense was that avoiding the finding alternatives to to killing people?

Goodale: Okay. I think that's actually a really nice alien perspective again. Taking the 10,000 foot view, one of the one of the

Izbicki: And [00:54:04] I

Goodale: think the kind of moral Concepts, or moral aspect of this case study. I think I could come out of it is, is the use of the use of nuclear warfare versus conventional Warfare. And so for you to kind of talk about your process of You know, at some point you you came to the understanding using nuclear weapons, and I'm going to restate this and please if I'm correct, tell me if not, [00:54:34] please a man but using nuclear weapons. Not just not morally justified in your mind. And then you kind of kept scaling it down. Like okay. Well, if not that, then what about this? Okay. Well, if not this then what about this other thing all the way down to the point of saying? Okay. Well, In my view, in your

view. Using any kind of weapon to kill her Harmon adversary is not morally Justified.
[00:55:04] Is that how accurate is

Izbicki: that? It's real accurate. Okay. Okay,

Goodale: great. We're go ahead.

Izbicki: I'm just thinking back to the class ethics class 2 and talking about the just Warfare and one of the key things that I remember like thinking about a lot at this time. It was that In order for the war to be just [00:55:34] by like the Navy's own standards. It had to have we had to have exhausted all of the other possible like means of resolving the conflict. And so I remember starting to think a lot about like Okay. Well, like what are we actually doing to resolve these other possible conflicts? And that seems like that's something that we weren't doing at all? [00:56:04] And then

Goodale: when you say that we weren't doing it, all you talking about the country was not doing in terms of Iraq and

Izbicki: Afghanistan.

Goodale: Or historically,

Izbicki: or so both in those particular situations, but I'd say more like in general that by being a professional Soldier. So, there are lots of these, like, motivational videos that get played at all. These [00:56:34] training commands, and watching a missile strike, a building, and then everybody in the room. Cheers. It seems like in order to Be an Effective professional Soldier, you have to have that attitude of like celebrating when you have a success and but that attitude of not know enjoying your work is somehow can't be compatible with trying to avoid [00:57:04] having to do your work.

Goodale: So enjoying the work in this case necessarily. means enjoying the fact that you have taken a life is that Yeah to

Izbicki: say. Yeah doctoral. Okay, and I do specifically remember the the captain in charge of the command telling us that if you're not enjoying this work, then then you shouldn't be here.

Goodale: So big

Izbicki: or [00:57:34] the it was the npt CP command. And but this work me more broadly than the stuff in like the the

Goodale: Work in general. Okay.

Izbicki: Gotcha.

Goodale: We're at an hour. How are you

Izbicki: doing? I'm fine on time.

Goodale: Okay, okay, and just generally, good with good with a question [00:58:04] so far.

Izbicki: Yeah, I think you're a very thoughtful with everything.

Goodale: We're about two-thirds of the way through the questions I have for this. For this interview, which I think is primarily going to be the bulk of bulk of my collection.

Izbicki: Maybe even three quarters done. Okay,

Goodale: [00:58:35] so we've kind of tab to the point where you decided to apply for conscientious objector status

Izbicki: before we

Goodale: push forward into that. Another question I had is, if you had been assigned to a different War fighting Community out from the Naval Academy. So surface Warfare or I don't know how open these were when you were here. But, like, intelligence or cryptologic Warfare.

Izbicki: Even,

Goodale: [00:59:07] you know, really any of them, right? Aviation, whatever. Do you think you would have drawn the same process of discovery about your faith and your military

Izbicki: duty? Yeah. I've wondered that a lot too. I think, my guess is that if I had gone like Marines, I would have been so confronted with it that I would have had a similar process, but I think, if I don't know going swimming. Or something else that could have

kept me a little bit more [00:59:37] distant from thinking about it. I, I could easily see a totally different life for myself where I never did this process, right? And, of course,

Goodale: you know, one never knows what the other path might lead to right? But, but I it is interesting. I think that to hear particular about the, you know, the your perspective on, you know, if you were slow, it could have been different. because, [01:00:07] I'm just imagining in writing the case. It opens it up to more broadly, to people, of all different future communities thinking, you know, not just the future Submariner thinking about this question. It be something applicable to everybody

Izbicki: is intelligence and crypto things that are open like not line officers now.

Goodale: Yes, so used to be when I was when I was there, those were really restricted line, you know, I mean, there's there's still Restricted [01:00:37] line, but they were for, you know, the baseball guy who got an injury. They came a 70, you know, or whatever. But now in particular, at least, And I don't know the numbers, but certainly for cryptologic Warfare. For Intel, even the Marine Corps. We have a Marine Corps, cyber major figure MOS. Now that people can directly, it's like you can go are round and now we get a second cybers at their. Yeah, so [01:01:07] these are all opening up as

Izbicki: options.

Goodale: That people can kind of directly go into from the academy. Okay. And then I had another question before we get into the

Izbicki: actual.

Goodale: Okay, so and just along the lines of like different warfighting communities. One thing that you would also mentioned I think in the New York Times article. [01:01:37] Was, I mean once you had kind of gone through this? This internal Reckoning of what you weren't willing. We're not willing to participate in someone posed. The question, or there was a question about, what about lat transferring to another community that wasn't directly involved with war fighting?

Izbicki: Like yeah,

Goodale: like [01:02:07] the, you know, the chaplaincy itself or etc, etc. And in the article at least I got the impression that you would kind of made that decision that you really didn't want to have anything to engage in them in the in the military machine at all as it were. Can you, can you kind of talk about that perspective?

Izbicki: Yeah. So one of the things that I was [01:02:37] really struggling with when I was first doing the conscientious, objector stuff was do, I do the full discharge or just the non-combatants? Patent aspect. And I think, at first, I was really looking for, like, trying to figure out some sort of non-combatant role that that would fit me. The yeah, so the two that were like proposed to me, [01:03:07] it was a another military chaplain who had proposed either that. I join the chaplaincy or, or become a doctor in the military. And the, I guess there was sort of both like, Practical. And I guess I do moral reasons why those didn't feel right? The Practical [01:03:37] was just that in order to say be a doctor. You have to go do 10 years of med school or something and that That wouldn't have worked out with navy, timelines and things the from from like that. The moral perspective, though. Like if I were going to be a chaplain, for example, and I was going to have trying to think about like, how would I comfort a soldier [01:04:07] who was going through the same sort of issues that I was going through right now, I I didn't see myself being able to like, I don't be neutral about that in the way that like a chaplain is supposed to be neutral about that. So I don't see how I could have fulfilled. The responsibilities that I was supposed to have and I'm not, [01:04:37] that's even like, should I try to be neutral? I guess. I still don't even know the answer to that. There's just, there's no way that I could be neutral. that I have very strong feelings that yeah, there are better things than war that we can be doing and There's no way for me to not reject that on the people. Okay,

Goodale: and that, that, that makes sense. Okay, so then pulling [01:05:07] up that tab, right? You decide. So

Izbicki: one less thing to about that. So for

Goodale: the

Izbicki: noncombatant like legal option of the discharge, it turns out that reading a Supreme Court case or something somewhere. Maybe it was in the military. Regulations. The the defining thing for that regulation about what

Goodale: makes somebody a combatant as

Izbicki: whether they are issued a weapon, like in 16 or sidearm [01:05:37] or something. And so conceivably I could have applied to be a noncombatant and then still be the person like on the submarine, who is like the weapons officer in charge of, Launching these nuclear weapons. So interesting. And so I think those regulations really weren't written for officers in mind. They were written for enlisted. Where okay, you're the non-combatants are going to be empathetic and [01:06:07] there's, I've searched really hard to find a and officer noncombatant case and never found one. Hmm, okay. Okay.

Goodale: So you make the decision to apply for conscientious objector status. And so what, [01:06:37] what does that, how does that

Izbicki: play out? So this this actually I remember really thinking about the the ethics class at the Naval Academy. When I did this, that one of the case studies and I guess in retrospect. It must have been a more senior officer that the the officer was being asked to do something that they didn't like. And so they resigned your commission and that was seen as an appropriate thing to do and encouraged by [01:07:07] the by the class. I specifically remember the Very lecturer for that part and they'd said that's the appropriate thing to do in this situation. And so I felt like that's what what I was doing was that I was following the Guidelines and procedures put in front of me by the Navy about, you've come across something that you don't feel is, right. This is what you do about it. Right? And and so that's that's what I did. [01:07:40] I was pretty surprised at the amount of pushback. I got from my command about it. That everybody was very professional about it, but Yeah. Applied sort of the command kept on kind of ghosting my application. Kind of ignoring that had ever been submitted and I had to remind them several times to go through the [01:08:10] actual process of all the appointments that needed to be set up and everything. I remember the, the investigating officers that That I met with. They all seemed significantly more hostile than I was guessing. There was, they were trusting me on this,

like two billion dollar nuclear submarine, that, my signature meant, that this valve is correct [01:08:40] in the submarines, not going to break or whatever. But when I was saying something about, like, What I thought I was capable of doing in a combat environment because that's what I felt. Like I was saying, is that if you put me in this combat environment, I'm going to have to disobey an order and that's going to get people killed. And I don't want, I don't think you should want that and I don't want that. Hmm. But I felt like that. Yeah. All this trust that I was being careless. [01:09:10] Yeah. I was being entrusted with a lot of stuff. Professionally, but not that trust was not extended at all to, to this process. Hmm.

Goodale: Why do you think that was?

Izbicki: I think, well, I remember some of the things that the officer said to me was that they didn't want me to have gone through. Basically. I've gotten all this education from the Naval [01:09:40] Academy and get away for free from it. Okay. And so, I think there was this big perception that I was somehow cheating. The Navy out of something. Is that I don't feel that way. That one of the things that I tried to like make clear through my applications. Is that my school still to serve my country somehow. And if there was any other possible way that I could have been, [01:10:10] like, fulfill out my obligation, then, then I would try that, I would be doing that. I think, at some point, some of the commanding officers were trying to like protect my career from from like, here's just a kid. Making a mistake about they're going through a phase. And and so I think that's kind of like why the application and things was [01:10:40] being delayed is they don't want it on my record or whatever. So

Goodale: they wanted to give you time to come around. So it's as it were.

Izbicki: You know, from different perspective, maybe, okay. But yeah, I think I'd buy that point. I'd been been wrestling at the with it, for quite a while and so it's a pretty sure that that that was the path for me. Okay?

Goodale: [01:11:12] For this first applique. I know you applied twice a long. Was this first application process from, you know, first decision to do it too, kind of the result of that. I know. He said there were

Izbicki: delays. There's about six months from when I applied to when I heard back, it was denied, which I think is about as fast as they go over all.

Goodale: Okay, and so we, when you've heard back, it was denied. How did [01:11:42] you react to

Izbicki: that? Extremely upset that. Yes, totally confused about how I should be, you're like living out my or yeah, fulfilling my duties as a naval officer. Now that I have, I guess, both like deeply feeling, like I can't fulfill them. And after having told my command that, [01:12:12] that, I don't think I can fulfill them either. at this point, I reached out to there's a GI rights hotline is a like a military, advocacy group and and they put me in touch with the ACLU to To prepare the second application to get discharged. [01:12:42] Okay.

Goodale: And it's just a second application. You were getting legal assistance from the

Izbicki: ACLU. Yeah, they are. So part of the discharge process as you meet with the investigating officer, right? Yeah, so there was two lawyers from the ACLU who joined that meeting with us and yeah, made sure that. [01:13:13] So in the first case, one of the problems with it the reason so normally you're not allowed to have a second discharge application. But in the first case, there was a lot of procedural problems that Investigating officer didn't do correctly and in particular like applying his own religious beliefs to. So this one he had he had been a Catholic and asked me what are they? The Catholic Ten Commandments? I gave him the Protestant version and he said, [01:13:43] okay, if you don't even know the Ten Commandments happen to be a religious person, okay. So one of the things that I think could be useful from like the perspective of an ethics class is even if a student right somehow, they know they're never going to have to wrestle with these issues. One of the things I don't know is that somebody in their command might have to wrestle with them and they need to be if they're that investigating officer like know that you [01:14:13] can't apply your own religious or non-religious tests to do these things.

Goodale: Impartiality and I know that you mentioned this in our initial email that this is an aspect. Yeah any other thoughts just with regard to that or or examples as you

were going through the process of where you saw kind of a lapse of ethical leadership or a kind of ethical processes?

Izbicki: One of [01:14:43] the so I guess in the second investigating officer case the same sort of like religious tests were ended up being applied. But this case from uh, there's a Evangelical perspective of if you don't believe it evolution is false and the Genesis is literal. Then how can you believe that? The other parts of the Bible should be should be true. [01:15:14] That's for the most part. Like I didn't have any like, retaliation in terms of Like favorite apps and things like that. I think everybody handled those still professionally in terms of my I think one of the things that my commanded well was they just recommended that? I not talk about this with the other officers and enlisted people at the command [01:15:44] and that we're just gonna I'll be going through the the commands just like like Else. And I guess that part went. Well,

Goodale: okay, and so

Izbicki: just

Goodale: continue on on that, on that line. He said, he didn't really feel any certainly repercussions or retaliation [01:16:14] when it came to fit reps. But just in the way, I mean, did did your fellow officers find out at some point or how were you treated? As you're going through these processes? Kind of

Izbicki: generally my peers number. I don't think a command ever told them, and I told some of the math, like, when we were Commands everybody's going off to their different ships. But yeah. Throughout the process. I didn't [01:16:44] didn't tell anybody. There were a number of times when it was ended up being a little bit awkward of like part of a training pipeline was going off to shooting ranges or something. And so I didn't go to those. It was a running joke that I was being. Being trained for a particularly secret mission.

Goodale: Yeah, [01:17:14] okay.

Izbicki: But yeah, I think From like a personal personal perspective. It was incredibly hard, keeping like isolating this part of my life from the other things that I'm supposed to be doing at the as part of my job. Because I went to the [01:17:44] did that

Vijay program. I was like, sort of off schedule with all the other Naval Academy graduates and it was more like ROTC people who are with me. So I didn't really feel like I had for the most part other friends in the the military who I could talk to about any of this and because yeah, just in the different locations for Periods of time didn't really well [01:18:14] in South Carolina. Yes. Well in South Carolina, didn't really get any good like outside friendships back up in Connecticut. I got It's part of a place called Saint Francis house. It's like a pacifist community and that was a very helpful.

Goodale: Where you connected with them as you were going. When did you first connect with them? I

Izbicki: guess. [01:18:44] It was after I'd some when starting so big up in Connecticut. I'm not even sure how I like encountered them. Actually. It might have been there was a protester who sat outside the the base every day and I just went up to talk to him. Oh it's a little bit and he told me about this place and so I went and visited them on. A weekend or something. And it was just

Goodale: before you before you [01:19:14] drop your first

Izbicki: application know, this would have been after my second application.

Goodale: Go after your second one. Okay, got it. And so again, just a timeline things that you said your first application took about six months to consider. You, you got your denial General amount of time and space in between that and the second application and then also amount of space of time for the second application to get

Izbicki: approved. Yeah, so the denied in [01:19:44] probably December of 2009 an inch, and then immediately said I was right at the end of the nuclear training immediately transferred up to gratin. Yeah, and actually the so, the orders that I had were to transfer to the the Jimmy, Carter the submarine. Yep, and then the grinds just like a Away place. So I was pretty worried about like, okay, I've six weeks until [01:20:14] I'm supposed to show up on this submarine. And how do I do? What do I do with that? And so I talked to my Lieutenant or somebody at this command about. I think these orders are not in the best interest of the Navy and he told me to write about memo for the captain and and I did and then the captain told me to apply a second time. Okay

Goodale: the end again just to be clear. Did you did [01:20:44] you submit your first application while you're still in

Izbicki: Charleston? Yeah, okay.

Goodale: And then so while and it you got your denial towards the end of that

Izbicki: pipeline. It was the same day that I got the orders to leave.

Goodale: Gotcha. And then, okay. So first application was in Charleston. Second application was in, when you had moved up to gratin, and how long, how long would the gratin pipeline have been? This [01:21:14] is only six weeks six weeks. Okay, and then somewhere within that six weeks you submitted your second application. Early and kind of once you got there or,

Izbicki: you know, is probably the day that I got there. I talk to the lieutenant who is in charge of me and then I do maybe two weeks into that is when the application got formally

Goodale: submitted. Okay, and, and so, all along through the first application that denial is second application. You are continuing [01:21:44] to training. Is that, is that correct? Yeah.

Izbicki: Okay.

Goodale: So, second application comes back and it's

Izbicki: approved. The second application, was actually also denied, also

Goodale: denied. Okay,

Izbicki: now I'm gonna work. Yeah, and that's when the ACLU lawyers filed, a called habeas corpus [01:22:14] petition and and then the Court ruled that so the courts not allowed to rule on whether I'm actually a conscientious objector or not. Just whether the Navy. Their procedures correctly. Okay. And the ruling was that the Navy didn't follow the procedures? Okay,

Goodale: the am just looking at your website that you have a link to the habeas corpus petition, but the link it that the actual petition is no longer found on the ACLU website. Is that [01:22:44] something you could get for

Izbicki: me? I think so. Okay. Yeah, I definitely have it.

Goodale: And how long did that petition take to go through?

Izbicki: A year, maybe a little longer, maybe like 18 months.

Goodale: And what were you doing? In the meantime? Then?

Izbicki: I think my assignment [01:23:14] was for my official position was the security officer of the submarine base. Okay. Basically just making sure all the keys and stuff or not lost. Processing people, security clearances. Okay, I think.

Goodale: So. You still maintain a role at the command? Up until the point where the petitions comes back and so what happens when the position comes

Izbicki: back? Then. Yeah, the the day [01:23:44] that the court made a ruling. I started the discharge process and I think that took like a week of going through the different meetings and stuff and I was done

Goodale: DD-214, and then, and then at the end. in terms of, Classification of discharge, it was an honorable [01:24:14] discharge. Is that

Izbicki: correct? It

Goodale: was and what it was there. Any kind of contention for that at all in terms of it being honorably or

Izbicki: other than? So, the anytime the conscientious objector discharge is always an honorable discharge order. It does come with like I do. Nega benefits, I don't get like GI bill or anything Showtime, [01:24:44] okay. I also had to repay the tuition cost for the Naval Academy. and

Goodale: with that was for your time at the Academy was, was that also for the grad Graduate Studies,

Izbicki: or [01:25:17] I don't know that the final bill ended up being, I think it was both of them put together 300,000 but then because the commitment for the V Jep runs concurrently with the Naval Academy, I'd ended up serving three out of the five years. So it ended up being about like 100,000 after the / rating. It was supposed to pay back.

Goodale: [01:25:48] So also ultimately paid about 100,000. Yeah, okay, and so you are on our daily discharge and then and then what what did you do

Izbicki: next? So yeah, convinced that I wanted to somehow, or yeah, still had this vision of wanting to make the world a better place to safer Place, serving my country and not entirely sure how what that would look like. [01:26:19] Then I knew I really liked computer science, and that education. It seems like a good way to build Bridges between cultures. So came to UC Riverside, real close to home to do a PhD and then sort of constantly looking for ways to sort of still fulfill that mission and heard about this program with North Korea, academic exchanges. And And so since [01:26:49] 2015, I've been working on academic exchanges between North Korea and the us as a way to have ordinary citizens between our two countries, learning about each other and improving relations without the whole political

Goodale: process. Sure. Okay,

Izbicki: the

Goodale: the New York Times article speaks about [01:27:19] you going to the st. Francis community, and spending some time there. How much time do you spend there? And what did you do?

Izbicki: I lived there. So, maybe about a month by month after moving to gratin moved into the the st. Francis House. The so it's not there. There's this order franciscans, which is a Christian order and they have [01:27:51] like, a proper monasteries, in some places. This is what they called, a third order franciscans, which means they weren't like cloistered together, but living out in the world. And so there were two Franciscan Brothers, who lived there and Then a number of number of other people. Amira course, number of people like working with Americorps coming through and living there. There [01:28:21] was one person who was a Native American Shaman who, who lived there Cole, go ahead,

big, big mix, sort of like regular prayer times in the morning and then They do a lot of community sort of Outreach and events mostly like helping with poverty, sort of sort of issues. I didn't, I didn't do too much of those [01:28:51] sorts of things because of the Navy obligations, but

Goodale: You were living there and also still serving in that in your career, in

Izbicki: your backyard. So I have to get up in the morning and head over to the today Basin. Spend the day at the base.

Goodale: Sure, okay. Can you talk to me about your just your your mentality after you had gotten [01:29:21] honorably discharged? any Reflections on on just that the journey as a whole and and, you know, ultimately if you feel like you did did the right thing or might have done it differently if you had gone through it again, any kind of Reflections about

Izbicki: that, you know, one of the things that Like I always [01:29:51] like personally really wanted to do was to whatever my job was. If it wasn't directly like related to killing people. I wanted to basically be the best person at it at in my environment. And so I didn't want there to be like any thoughts, either in my mind, my own mind or other people's mind that like that. I'm just trying to skirt my obligations and I think it did. A pretty [01:30:21] good job at that given a handful of different awards for like the performance sort of awards. One of the Bible verses that came to mind a lot is Jesus tells his followers to if somebody forces you to go with them. One mile, go with him, two miles. Yeah, and so I took that literally with like running into Physical exercise. I was always [01:30:51] the all the parties, the first one to cross, the finish line on ice. So I guess again retrospect. I feel proud of how I handled it. Everything. It's not the whole process took a lot longer and was a lot more frustrating personally than I wish it would have. [01:31:22] Yeah, I still wish there were some sort of way for people who have similar feelings like me to serve our country without having to bear arms. I don't that doesn't seem like it's gonna happen anytime soon.

Goodale: [01:31:53] You so sense since I got going through that experience of successfully being being, just discharged as a conscientious objector. You've been pretty

public about it. Obviously, there's the New York Times article looking for articles, you Your ear Ted Talk. And then of course, a cruise your website. And I mean, you're kind of you've, you've been pretty transparent, I think about your experience. Why?

Izbicki: [01:32:24] Yeah, it's a good question. I think the main reason is that like I do in retrospect. It seems like I should have been exposed to the idea of conscientious objection and then somebody should have forced me to think about these things. Before that Naval chaplain did and as it. So I am really excited that that could potentially happen at the Naval Academy. So yeah, so that's [01:32:54] one reason that like, I wish I had some sort of example when I was right struggling with these things. Somebody else to follow. Another one, is that Yeah, so wanting like me to be able to help other people going through similar processes. So since being discharged, I've counseled probably somewhere between 20 and 30 other Sailors or soldiers going through the discharge Co discharge process somehow [01:33:26] and then yeah, they've all sort of just found me through those those resources. And also I guess I know that. Another idea of like honor and everything from the Naval Academy. That still feels like, very important to me. And this being transparent about everything, seems like a way to help ensure that like this process was an honorable one and not one that like [01:33:57] Trying to make it clear both to myself and to everybody else that not trying to shirk my duties. But trying to fulfill them out. Actually.

Goodale: Did you receive any kind of direct criticism from people in terms of that aspects? People people saying claiming that you were trying to skirt your duties by doing this and if so, how did you respond to

Izbicki: that? I think everybody who I call my close friends, who know me personally [01:34:27] had the exact opposite reaction that like, this is The Honorable thing for you to do people again, so, like, higher up in the command, who didn't know me. That was. I think their main reason for having a negative reaction to, to the discharge process is here somebody who's just trying to get a free education and then not live up to their commitments that supposed to come with it. From actually [01:34:57] from the like I guess the Christian world after being discharged and I've had a number of like Christian organizations, tell me that what I did was inappropriate and that I was shirking. My duty kind of surprisingly to me. There's been a number of atheists organizations that have Sort

of reached out and saying that [01:35:27] they're glad that I took the stand, that that I did instead of for my beliefs. That is interesting. so,

Goodale: I mean, this whole journey was kind of predicated on on your religious views on your plenty of Christian

Izbicki: views, right? And then

Goodale: ultimately it's the atheists to come to your

Izbicki: support

Goodale: atheist organization. So what do you make of

Izbicki: that? Yeah. I think it's the idea of the freedom of religion being very important to [01:35:57] the to the atheist community. That been feeling like a minority and wanting to support other people who have minority religious viewpoints. In terms of like why the Christian groups being opposed? I think it's my own view is that the a lot of Christianity in the u.s. Is very like [01:36:27] tied up with with us nationalism and it's hard to for a lot of people to separate those two things out and I think for even for me like when I was growing up as a little School or high schooler. I definitely had no clear line in my own religious views about where does religion end and Country began. And I think that's, yeah, that's hard for a lot of people to [01:36:57] reconcile that, right?

Goodale: That's, that's interesting. That's an interesting

Izbicki: point.

Goodale: I was there when you were, were there any kind of terms? I mean, we talked about the the repayment, but was there any kind of terms of doing something? Service-oriented afterwards, or was that more of a personal? Some of you two kinds of personal

Izbicki: responsibility. Those just a personal commitment? [01:37:27] I think I was going to offer that. I think I put it in my like applications but there's just no, like procedure for

Goodale: something like that. Yeah, okay. And so I talked about kind of the criticism that you that you receive that back then and how you how you responded to it. Well, how did you did you did you talk about how you responded to it?

Izbicki: Yeah, I don't think I did. I don't know, I think. [01:38:00] from the felt the whole discharge process ended up being about two years or so between all the different applications and I think through that process, I sort of developed a pretty thick skin about How. Yeah? Maybe maybe a better better way of phrasing. It. Is that going back to that idea of Honor, like really wanting this to be like the doing this, the right way, as much as possible. [01:38:30] And so, when confronted with somebody who's maybe not fully understanding, why I was doing what I was doing, being able to, I guess empathize with them that five years ago. I wouldn't have understood it either. So just take it on. Take it on the cheeks or sort of thing. Sure.

Goodale: And is that [01:39:00] my next question which you might have just answered? But it today how would you respond to for example, to midshipman who read this case and make it make it, make that kind of judgment against you or anybody

Izbicki: else? Yeah, so that the the main thing that they should keep in mind is that if you're in a command and somebody in your command, whether it's a peer or a subordinate is going through this process and and you don't treat them respectfully or professionally then [01:39:30] that's going to ultimately harm the Navy and and look bad on the Navy from a public relations perspective and legally. And so it should be part of your like Duty as a naval officer. To treat people wrestling with these issues. Respectfully, okay.

Goodale: I want to spend some time, tying some things out, but that is pretty much the extent of the main questions that [01:40:00] I have for you on a case. Specifically, in terms of, you know, fleshing it out. Now that you've kind of shared and answered, my questions are there. What what inputs what am I not asking you that you Is relevant or important to

Izbicki: consider. It's a good question. I think it's there's a number of things. [01:40:30] So I'll just list them off to make sure we talked about them, but I like the idea

of I was a kid. We had the case study in the ethics class of probably more senior officer, who was wanting not feeling like I could follow their their duties and

Goodale: was it that Rockwood case where there's a man who went to Haiti.

Izbicki: Do you remember? Don't remember at all the details? Yeah, okay.

Goodale: [01:41:06] You bring that up to kind of to kind of speak to your process of going through that kind of check. It

Izbicki: seems like it's a sort of a closely related case potentially to what the midshipmen are going to be exposed to. And just that the differences between the cases are clear, and I don't know why. One person a more senior officer doesn't have the That they've signed [01:41:36] on to and so the the resignation is something that's appropriate at that point. Where is it? Maybe in theory, it would be good for the junior officers to be able to do that. But it's not a actually, a thing. Yeah. Yeah, I think the we didn't really talk about the like, like the procedures of, there's [01:42:06] the investigating officer at the chaplain and the, the psychologist that have to interview and really, the purpose of those other interviews is to find like an appropriate other discharge. For, for somebody, it's like if somebody is suffering from Pete Pete. SD then they could have that as a, maybe an easier discharge route than that, the conscientious objector thing. And that could be useful [01:42:36] for again, midshipman who have this going on in their command, to understand about trying to help people get the other appropriate. Medical discharge has may be

Goodale: okay. And I can certainly see how that that could be like an administratively easier route, but just from I'm like an ethical perspective

Izbicki: and also from my perspective. It didn't make sense that there was no, like, my problem was specifically [01:43:06] for I had this this moral concern and and there were no other like administrative discharges. That makes sense. Okay. I know there's there's one enlisted Marine who was going through the discharge process. For him. The particular thing that made him be against war, was he saw from what he says, he saw [01:43:36] the other Marines, scooping out a civilians brain with, with a spoon and, and, and so he ended up getting a PTSD related discharge based on those experiences. Yeah, I think yeah, I think we've covered pretty much everything. Okay.

Goodale: [01:44:06] Who else would you recommend? Okay circling back that that I would reach out to specifically by name. If you can in terms

Izbicki: of

Goodale: making this case multi-dimensional,

Izbicki: you know, there's well, so too close like Naval Academy. Your friends are Paul crunk and hazy saborio, like an awesome first [01:44:36] back and get you there, like contact information. If

Goodale: you don't know if you and mind to do that for these and any others, you think of just that, I have it in an email that would that would be a be awesome.

Izbicki: It was my guess too. Is also that the ACLU lawyers that helped on the case might be interested in talking. So, I can get you their contact, okay? To the other people that [01:45:06] were involved or people had like the st. Francis House. I don't know though that how much like If it wouldn't have been involved in like a specific development of the doing that the beliefs or anything, it would have been more just what my life looks like. At that point. Sure. What

Goodale: about any of the chaplains? The various chaplains

Izbicki: that you don't remember any of their names? Sure. The [01:45:37] actually, yeah, there's there was one retired chaplain who, who helped me I could get His contact information. Okay, one of the things that he had mentioned, was that, it's really difficult for a currently serving in service military chaplain to help a conscientious objector case, because it it reflects badly on there, like promotion, [01:46:07] if they help with the name, okay. I'm sure the other. like chaplains and investigating officers and all their names are in the In that case, work somewhere.

Goodale: Okay, and

Izbicki: what

Goodale: about any of the officer [01:46:37] like the commanding officers, or anybody involved kind of on the administrative side as you were going through MP TCP and BTU or

Izbicki: sobic? So the the investigating officers name is Lieutenant Commander price for the second one. Yeah, then the, [01:47:08] I'm sure somewhere on the command web pages, the captains at the time. In 2008, 2009 would be listed. Okay, who who actually served like did administrative paperwork? I can't think of their names off the top of my head.

Goodale: Okay, but I could perhaps contact the commands and investigate that. You're so your website. [01:47:39] You mentioned also that you'd be able to provide that habeas corpus petition or at least look for

Izbicki: which we get that,

Goodale: that would be great. And then your website does have So that what's on your website? It's it seems like it are Abridged versions of much. Much larger documents. Is that

Izbicki: correct? Yeah, so it's part of the of the second discharge second application for discharge. [01:48:10] One of the things that the the lawyers with me did was record, the meeting with the investigating officer and then, You, take those out this transcripts. And so you have a think, a full transcript in that habeas corpus petition. But these are the what I put on the websites, the more like, I guess belief oriented stuff and but that's probably, like, 10% of the things that got talk about.

Goodale: Okay, [01:48:42] if necessary, it would it be possible to access the entire transcript, reset. It could be, it would maybe be in the habeas.

Izbicki: Opus petition. It should be with that when I get that to you.

Goodale: Okay? Excellent. I think that's all. That I would be looking for presently. And so I just kind of finally want to ask is there I asked a lot of questions about [01:49:12] you. Do you have any questions for me?

Izbicki: I said I was a little bit curious. Like how you got interested in this doing this case study or how you found me?

Goodale: Yeah. Okay. So I we for my grad program. We have a thesis and it's to be done in one year and we all kind of started a bit late on it. So it's a bit about yeah, but

so my advisor, dr. Marcus had all who I think was CC done [01:49:42] our original email and who I'm actually shortly mentioned that a potential thesis would actually just be would be to develop case studies to be used in any two or three. And so I kind of have a cart before the horse in that I knew that I wanted to develop Some kind of case study and my I am working with a partner. It's kind of a, it's a, we're both working on the same project. These thesis project doesn't work. He's [01:50:12] just doing a completely different case study than I am. But it, and it's so in the course of finding, you know, finding that the story right to fit the bill, whatever it may be. We interviewed a number of senior senior, any 2003, and Instructors at the Academy and one of the instructors, a couple of them just mentioned again. This idea of, you know, we don't talk about how the Constitutional Paradigm at least as it's traditionally taught, doesn't involve [01:50:42] God or religion or family and that that ends that could end up being a really big question for, you know, naval officers who didn't talk about it at the Academy. And then another dr. Doug Rau ra you. He knew of you somehow because he mentioned. He mentioned your name specifically. And so when I went back and I was sniffing out a case. I look [01:51:12] back at the transcript of my interview, with him about this whole thing in general. And I feel honed in on your name and I was like, okay, maybe enjoy who, you know, Googled you and and looked you up in the library. And if course, aw. And found out more about your story. Also, there's a professor garon. I don't know if you know him at all. I don't know if you know any of these people, but he teaches he kind of informally teaches about it. Dear your case. Just based on the Press coverage [01:51:42] of you. And

Izbicki: so

Goodale: Kind of a combination of all that led me to, to realize like we had. I kind of had I had something here. I'm really glad that you are open to talking because I think it could be just as likely, if it had been, it's a separate situation separate

Izbicki: person. He would have, you know, someone

Goodale: in that position could have said like, nope, don't want anything to do with it. So, I think it's [01:52:12] all. It's all really, really worked out. This answer your

Izbicki: question. Yeah, yeah. Thanks, so.

Goodale: Any other

Izbicki: questions? No, just yeah, if there's anything else be happy to help with.

Goodale: Okay. Yes, sir. I appreciate very much. I think I'm sure that we will be in touch again at some point. I'm going to be spending next week is spring break. And while the mids are going out to all kinds of wild places. I'm going to be going off to the wild library to. Yeah. [01:52:42] Start to construct this and so I'm sure that there are going to be probably some nitpicky, just timeline questions, or whatever, that, come up and then again, I think it would be in everybody's best interest that eat that you since this is your story that you read it at the end and just make sure that it kind of accurately reflects the version of this case study that you want portrayed soon. Yeah, excellent. [01:53:12] The best way to contact you is by email like last time.

Izbicki: Yeah, that's good.

Goodale: Excellent. And Yes, I like I said, I really do appreciate you taking the time. I think this is gonna be a great case and I really do believe that it could really make a difference in people's lives. Thank you very much Dr. Izbicki.

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APPENDIX O. CDR ALDRIDGE SPEECH

Sailors as Warfighters—Toughness in Action

CDR Stephen Aldridge, Commanding Officer, USS MASON (DDG 87)

Leadership Mess Symposium

May 25, 2017

Leesburg, VA

Pre Attack

“Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win.” This 25 hundred year old Sun Tzu maxim was the quote of the day in MASON’s Sunday, October 9, 2016 Plan of the Day, published only hours before the first of three separate cruise missile attacks on our deployment.

MASON deployed as part of the Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group on June 1, 2016. The first five months of our deployment included the typical events, a port visit in the Mediterranean, calls by Distinguished Visitors, national and multi-national exercises, port calls in the Middle East, routine maritime security operations, a short maintenance period, and real world submarine hunting. At month 5 of the deployment, in late September, we had a U.S. Coast Guard boarding team embarked and were set for more “maritime security operations” near the Horn of Africa.

Then the reports came in that the former HSV-2 Swift was destroyed by a cruise missile in in the southern Red Sea. MASON’s tasking changed, depart the Arabian Sea and head west to provide air defense coverage for U.S. forces in the Red Sea. I told the officers and chiefs, assembled topside for Khaki Call, “If there was ever a time to stand an exceptionally vigilant watch, now is the time.”

Nothing sharpens a warship’s focus like tasking to head into a rough neighborhood where anti-ship cruise missiles are flying. CDR Chris Gilbertson, then MASON’s Commanding Officer, and I, as Executive Officer, made near continuous inspections about the ship, ensuring MASON’s preparedness.

Much of the crew was excited, “we’re going to where the action is!” Some Sailors were scared, and for some—none of this really registered. Today, I’ll share with you the story of the Red Sea attacks through the eyes of MASON’s Destroyermen.

As I made my rounds in the Combat Information Center—after my direction to stand exceptionally vigilant watches—I found the Electronic Warfare Supervisor console vacant. The watch station responsible for employing decoys against inbound missile threats was empty. Five months into deployment, with the crew knowing that just days prior a large grey ship was hit with an anti-ship cruise missile in this neighborhood, complacency remained a real challenge. Soon, in walked Petty Officer Third Class Javon Kegler, the “on watch” EW Supervisor. As far as warfare coordinators go, he was very junior and had just recently qualified at a board with the Commanding Officer. I provided immediate spot correction, “You do not leave that console without a qualified relief in the seat, is that clear?” He simply replied, “Yes XO...”

Oct 9 attack

Shortly after 1900 on October 9th, in my stateroom, conducting Combat Information Center Watch Officer training with two Ensigns, I heard the 1MC key, “Vampire, Vampire”—the pro word for inbound missile—followed by BOOM, BOOM. I instantly grabbed the bug out-bag I prepared a week prior for just this case, and sprinted down the ladder to CIC... not knowing if we launched missiles or were just hit by one.

Seconds before, LT Tom Williams, MASON’s Electronics Materials Officer and on watch Tactical Action Officer, rolled the firing key green and gave the order, “Kill track Mike November-Zero-Zero-One.” Petty Officer Second Class Eric-Lee Howard, the Missile Systems Supervisor repeated, “Kill track Mike-November-Zero-Zero-One,” authorized the missiles, and reported “birds away!” to the watch team. Neither the Captain, nor I, were in CIC when missiles left the ship. The watchteam performed just as we trained. The TAO used the authority vested in him by the CO and defended the ship. Petty Officer Kegler, who just the day prior I reprimanded for leaving his station as the EW supervisor, was on watch and properly directed launching MASON’s decoys.

Every MASON Destroyerman remembers where they were that Sunday evening when LT Tom Williams grabbed the 1MC and said, “Vampire, Vampire!”

GM3 Colby Haithcock and GMSA Sharon Harder, who was TAD from the FORD for MASON’s deployment, were performing daily maintenance checks inside aft VLS, the larger of our two vertical missile launchers. This check requires “downing” the launcher and securing its power so Sailors can safely enter and check on the 64 missiles inside. All of a sudden they heard a loud swoosh from the forward VLS and barely made out the words “Vampire, Vampire” on the 1MC. Seaman Harder recalls, “Without a second thought training kicked in. We ran to lock up everything, turn everything [in the missile launcher] back to working condition. Haithcock ran to his station at forward VLS and I ran to man the deep mag to support the 5” gun crew.”

HT1 Chris Baxter, “On the 9th of October I reported to Repair Locker 3, were I did what Repair Division does. I made sure my fire party and repair parties were ready to go if called on to save our ship... it was the fastest and best I have ever seen zebra set.”

HN Jordan Smith, one of MASON’s junior corpsmen recalls, “HN Crowley and I finished evening sick-call at 1900 when we heard a word passed over the 1MC, but we couldn’t understand what was said. Immediately following that, we heard SM-2s leave the launcher and I ran to my Battle Dressing Station and set up to receive casualties. At the time it felt like my brain shut off and my body took over, I remember I had an unusual calm during the whole thing, my heart wasn’t pounding, all of the usual things I do when I am nervous or scared never happened. After setting up the Battle Dressing Station, we just stood by for casualties.”

“In the moment the situation almost seemed surreal,” recalls ENS Jef Van Hoof, MASON’s Officer of the Deck, “That day was a true test of my abilities as an OOD. I had been qualified for 7 days and was thrust into a situation that required all of my knowledge and concentration. My ability to react that day is a direct reflection on those who trained me and the quality of leadership we have aboard MASON.”

Given the aft launcher was offline for the daily maintenance checks Petty Officer Haithcock and Seaman Harder were performing, all the missiles were fired from the

launcher just forward of the pilot house. Destroyermen on the bridge wings dove inside feeling the heat, smelling the smoke, and hearing the blast of the rocket motors igniting sending missiles from 0 to Mach 3+ in seconds. Some watch standers hit the deck and curled up; after some prompt and direct orders, they resumed their watch standing duties.

Aegis Fire Controlman Second Class Brian Bienko recalls, “I was talking to my wife about the day and catching up. I heard ‘vampire, vampire’ and thought ‘we aren’t in a training environment.’ Upon hearing the metallic thud of SM-2s launching, I told my wife ‘I love you forever’ and hung up. I then ran around checking the status of my Aegis network computers and servers.” With River City 1 set immediately after the first engagement, it would be awhile before FC2 could talk to his wife again.

Inside CIC, all the leadership responded. The space was crowded, but quiet. The fog of war set in... what happened? Were we really shot at? How many missiles did we fire? Oh, we launched decoys too? Did the guns also shoot? What did PONCE see? The CTF commander is on the phone...

CDRE Arnold, embarked with his team from Destroyer Squadron Fifty, directed the force of MASON and PONCE to open the coast of Yemen. MASON’s snipes had already come to full power upon hearing the Vampire call—and we were ready to move, however, PONCE’s best speed was 12 knots, so we more or less began strolling away from the coast, keeping our protective air defense umbrella over the PONCE, the “high value unit...”

Then we saw it, a second inbound missile on the radar. Still with confusion in the air on what had just happened, the CO carefully checked all indications and gave the kill order. As the firing chain was set, the threat missile track dropped from our scopes, and no further missiles left MASON. More confusion, what was that inbound track?

In the aftermath, watch standers and responders swore only 10–15 minutes elapsed between the two threats. In fact 62 minutes elapsed between the two, the difference explained by the time compression that occurs when under intense stress and focus.

A typical training scenario in CIC lasts 1–2 hours when the training team leader finally assesses all training objectives met and announces, “stop the clock, stop the

problem.” The sweaty headsets come off, the team lets out a sigh, and huddles up for debrief. In this case, there was no “stop the problem”—it was hard to know when the ships and crews were safe. Can I let down my guard? Can I get some sleep? Take a shower? Grab some chow? When is it safe to conduct a watchteam turnover? Most of us did not sleep at all that night.

Many junior Officers and Sailors did not grasp the magnitude of the events of the 9th. That this was the first use of the Aegis Combat System—missiles and decoys—against inbound missile threats. Decades of deployments by Aegis Cruisers and Destroyers, and we were the ones tested. And proved we were ready.

We then departed the Red Sea, south through the Bab-el-Mandeb strait and into the Gulf of Aden for a scheduled refueling at sea and passenger transfer on October 12th. We sent off transferring Sailors and gained new ones. Our combat systems coordinator from the attacks on October 9th, usually the senior enlisted combat watch stander and right hand man for the TAO, a newly minted chief, FCC Jorge Correa got in a small boat and headed to the oiler to start his long journey home. Less than 72 hours after being in the middle of a missile battle, and arguably the biggest day in the history of the Aegis Combat System, this Aegis Chief executed a normal PCS transfer.

For the newly gained Sailors, they reported to a ship abuzz with stories of the engagement. “It was intense” and “you just missed it...” for some, this was their first real day in the Navy. Day one at their first command.

I recall asking our Chaplain, “What do you think about having a SPRINT team come out to the ship.” He replied, “All I see are chest bumps and high fives in the P-ways.”

Oct 12 attack

With the refueling and passenger transfer complete, MASON headed back north into the Red Sea that evening—October 12th—escorting SAN ANTONIO and a merchant. During a choke point transit like this, ships have all weapons and sensors at the ready. MASON’s topside machine guns were manned to defend against small boat threats. An embarked MH 60R helicopter was airborne providing force protection coverage for the ships.

With Destroyermen topside manning .50 caliber machine guns and a helicopter spinning on deck getting gas—it happened again. And again, with LT Tom Williams as the TAO, he grabbed the 1MC and made a “Vampire” call. As the salvo warning alarms went off, the machine gunners ran for cover as briefed. Again, missiles fired, this time from the aft launcher, right over the top of the helicopter spinning on deck. From the flight deck video recording, you can see the flight deck crew scramble to ready the bird and the pilot run back out to the helicopter, and prepare for takeoff. For a handful of MASON Sailors, this was their very first real day in the Navy.

Again the ship sprang into action. The entire ship coming together to fight as one unit, to fight as we trained.

ENS Samantha Cromer, one of my Engineering Division Officers recalls that day. “So you’re the OOD and there is a missile inbound. What do you do?” “What about if you’re in restricted waters?” “And the helo is spinning on deck.” “SCAT is on the weatherdecks.” These are the questions that I complained to my fellow DIVOs about on October 4th immediately following my OOD Board. They were ridiculous and entirely outside our realm of possibility. As a newly-qualified OOD on October 12th, these questions became my reality. Turns out you do what you’re trained to do, nothing more and nothing less. Online start all main engines, warn the personnel on the weatherdecks and the Flight Deck crew, inform the helo, and anticipate the TAO’s suggestions for maneuvering intentions. It happened quickly. The Captain pointed out to the Commodore a track on his console. Air called away a vampire on the net in the same instance. People took cover and the weapons system took care of the rest. If I had done nothing, the ship would have survived. Even as the OOD, there was no overwhelmingly important task asked of me. That’s the beauty of a warship though. We, as a crew, accomplish epic feats by way of every sailor completing one or two simple tasks. So know what your task is when that situation arises and you’re ready for battle.”

Wow, from a 24 year old Ensign, who qualified OOD 5 days prior to the first attack and was qualified a whopping 8 days total and lead her watch team through a missile attack.

MASON and the other ships in the Southern Red Sea then busted north to the Central Red Sea. Two attacks in 4 days, now what? The crew began getting restless. What are we doing? Are we going to respond? What's the plan?

Many junior Sailors' attitudes shifted from, "We're awesome!" to "Why are we still here? This is a bad place to hang out!" Let's just say, "keeping the sea lines of communication open" is a challenge to explain to folks who keep getting shot at.

The crew became quite frustrated. "Is the plan to just hangout here until we get hit? Why aren't we fighting back?" Nearly everyone was on edge—anytime the 1MC was keyed, people took a half step towards their battle station and let out a sigh of relief when a routine word was passed.

In the early morning of October 13th, the Tomahawk tasking came. USS NITZE launched Tomahawks into coastal radar sites while MASON stood by as the back-up shooter.

This of course led to additional frustration with the crew, "we're the ones being shot at, why aren't we shooting back?" The CO and I explained as best we could—that this was not just the Houthi rebels versus MASON.

A couple days later, we were ordered back south to the coast of Yemen. The crew's frustration mounted. And again—the CO and I did our best to keep them on task, vested in the mission.

Oct 15 attack

It began with another key of the 1MC, this time by LT Jeff Swaim as TAO late on October 15th. It was the start of a 3 hour long missile battle—several inbound missiles, multiple decoys and missiles fired in defense, and complex ship maneuvering to protect the force. Several times I was on the 1MC in CIC updating the crew, warning of inbound missiles, and calling away combat systems casualties. I provided direction to the TAO and support to the CO and CDRE.

At one point the Chief Engineer, LT Frank Dore, called me in CIC, "Sir, you need to keep updating the crew. The last thing they heard was you calling away an inbound

missile.” You then realize, the vast majority of the ship is physically, and mentally, bracing for shock. They have no idea of the status of engagements, whether a threat has passed or remains imminent. As HT1 Baxter said, we’re “ready to go if called on to save our ship.” Or as HN Smith said, “After setting up the Battle Dressing Station, we just stood by for casualties.”

Some Destroyermen ran towards danger, some braced for shock, and some reported to the mess decks and could do nothing but hold each other and cry.

My Damage Control Assistant, LT Shelbie Koch, noted we slowed by a couple minutes in getting material condition zebra set. Over the 1MC she told the crew, “We can’t start getting complacent during these missile attacks.” Who would have thought missile attacks could become so routine?

When this battle ended, MASON headed north, through the Suez Canal and re-loaded missiles and decoys in Greece. This was the first ever VLS SM-2 reload while deployed.

It was healthy for the crew to depart the Red Sea and get some downtime after a week of incredible pressure and stress. We then returned to the Red Sea for the majority of November. After an uneventful November, MASON returned to Norfolk in late December, concluding a 7 month long deployment.

Aftermath

Combat success comes from putting the work in every day: throughout the shipyard period, during the basic phase, and while underway for complex Strike Group training events. And continuing to put the work in every day on deployment. Then at the moment of truth—the true test—three things must come together: 1) a Sailor must be present, 2) they must know how to operate their equipment, and 3) that equipment must work. A Sailor’s day in and day out presence, his training and preparation, and his maintenance and care for equipment resulted in MASON’s combat success.

I'd like to unpack my second point there—know how to operate the equipment. A common theme throughout both the formal review and anecdotal recollections is, Sailors under combat stress, perform at the level of their training.

FC2 Howard looked back on the attacks and said, “As a Sailor this is going to help me focus on training because we saw that’s what it ultimately fell to—our level of training. This proves that our tactics are effective and that our equipment will get the job done.”

LT Williams, the TAO on Oct 9th and 12th, said the “training throughout [his] career, the mentorship from the Captain and XO, prior captains and executive officers and the workup as a strike group gave him the tools needed to make the right decision.”

Solid level of knowledge and skills based training builds confidence. And with confidence comes toughness. This is where the Chief’s Mess comes in.

Leadership must be forward looking to prepare for challenges ahead vice reacting to crisis.

Then the Subject Matter Experts, i.e., the Chiefs, must identify the skills required to meet these anticipated challenges and show our Sailors how to correctly perform the skills and tasks.

We must carve out the time to practice these skills—both as individuals and as a team. Then test the team under stress and pressure.

Something as simple as receiving the daily 12 o’clock reports is an opportunity to assess Sailor performance under pressure. The messenger arrives, I pop to attention and look the messenger in the eye while he recites, “The Officer of the Deck send’s her respects and wishes to inform you of the approaching hour of 12 o’clock. All reports are in hand, request permission to strike 8 bells on time, sir.” Many times they trip up, and I remain at attention—staring at them until they can get a correct report out to the Captain.

On MASON, every night underway on deployment we conducted firing checks—practicing how to remove all firing safeties and let the watch teams see that their combat system is ready to fire if needed.

After the first night of attacks, we drilled watchteams on how to more quickly manipulate the 5 inch gun to cover both surface and air threats in rapid succession. We drilled the button pushing and the cadence of verbal commands and reports. This type of skills based training builds confidence.

Then those Chiefs and SMEs must provide the critical feedback required for improving performance. Furthermore, are we preparing teams under new and varying types of stress to ready them for a combat performance?

On MASON, we do not have an A team. You don't know which watch team will get the inbound missile. Although Sailors reported to their battle stations and Zebra was ordered set, we did not call away General Quarters. The on watch team in CIC and the bridge stayed in the hot seat—literally.

MASON received the required Operational Stress Control training before deployment. From my recollection, it was focused on individual Sailor's stress levels. A lot on managing personal life stress and work life balance. There was focus on operational stresses—amount of work, amount of sleep, nutrition quality, etc. But I don't recall much on dealing with combat stress. Or when an entire command of 300+ Sailors is put under combat pressure.

MASON did take advantage of SPRINT team services twice on deployment, once during the missile re-load in late October and again on the transit home. Some of my Sailors continue to make use of available services to deal with the residual effects of October. I continue to check on them. Those post traumatic event services are helpful—but more focused on Sailor resilience post event. Toughness is, can you perform during the fight?

When I talk to my Destroyermen about toughness today, I sum it up as—Fighting through adversity and winning. I talk about developing moral, mental, and physical toughness.

Back to the quote from Sun Tzu, "Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win." MASON was going to succeed or fail in the Red Sea based on the training and preparations made long before

October 2016. The training conducted and skills practiced generated confidence, and that confidence makes the team tough enough to fight and win.

Thank you for all the work you, and Chiefs everywhere, do in preparing Sailors for combat. · I'd be happy to take any questions you may have.

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APPENDIX P. INTERVIEW WITH EMCS DANIEL HOLMES, USN

Interview conducted with Senior Chief Daniel Holmes. This interview was conducted in person on 28 January 2022. Senior Chief Daniel Holmes served on USS *Mason* from 2016 to 2019 as an EMC and was the acting Top Snipe (Senior Enlisted Engineer) during the first attack and EOOW (Engineering Officer of the Watch) for the second attack. In between the first and second attacks, the ship's Top Snipe came back from scheduled leave.

How long was USS *Mason* deployed before the failed attack on 9 October 2016?

Left on June 1st, 2016.

How would you define the threat environment and ship culture prior to the attack on HSV-2 *Swift*?

Before river city was set Sailors were looking up pictures of the HSV-2 *Swift* online and saw the HSV-2 *Swift* on fire. There was a conversation about the HSV-2 *Swift* going on across the ship. At that point onboard USS *Mason*, most of the ship's crew believed USS *Mason* would not be attacked because they were a warship. Their thought process was the Houthis would not attack a U.S. warship. The ship's crew was well aware of what happened to HSV-2 *Swift*.

After the attack on HSV-2 *Swift* did ship culture or perspective change?

Question not asked.

What events in chronological order do you recall from 9 October 2016?

It was night time and EMC Holmes was in his rack about to go to sleep when he heard Vampire, Vampire missiles inbound over the 1MC. The AEGIS Senior Chief was also in the berthing and they both jumped out of their rack. At this point, EMC Holmes was thinking "I don't remember going into a training environment." After putting his uniform on he ran down to Central Control Station on the starboard side. As he ran down the starboard side he remembers seeing the Command Master Chief's eyes and the look on his face, that was one of the triggers that this event was real. General Quarters was not

called, but Max Plant, COND II damage control and Zebra were set by engineering. After taking initial actions engineering department was on standby.

Were there concerns expressed from the crew after the failed attack?

This was EMC's third deployment to this area of operations and he said there was a lot of busy work going on, administrative tasks (e.g., zone inspections.) This event was a wake-up and the crew had a newfound focus and were "locked on" on their responsibilities for duties and watchstanding. To elaborate, EMCS Holmes noted the crew was properly standing their watches beforehand, but there was a noticeable difference in focus after the first attack. This was the same message he got when talking to the rest of the Chief's mess. During the second attack, EMC Holmes was the on-watch EOOW and was listening to Net 15 between the Bridge and Combat Information Center. EMC Holmes remembers thinking the second attack was different because he thought "wow they really want to kill us" whereas the first attack was seen as more a one-off and this ship had to fall back on their training. He was not sure if others had the same feeling, but thought it was probable. He did remember being extremely impressed by the actions his engineers took during the attacks. In between each of the attacks, the ship went back to COND III watchstanding.

Did any of the crew members leave the deployment early? If so, why did they leave early?

He did not recall anyone getting off at the next port, but could not be sure. He did mention one of his engineers in the following year choose to leave the Navy and part of his decision was based on symptoms of PTSD. There were opportunities for Sailors to leave if needed. He did hear there were some Sailors that said, "this is not what I signed up for" and some Sailors were crying in repair lockers, but he did not see this for himself.

How did crew members leaving early impact the ship; conversely, if they had not left the ship, how would their presence have affected the ship?

Not asked, because no Sailors left the ship.

What other information would be beneficial to developing a case study and allow the readers to feel they were present throughout the scenario?

Thought this is a good case study to show the dangers and fears of being complacent. After doing drills again and again across the Surface Navy there is a culture of compliance. Sailors need to have the warfighter mindset every time they train. He said when he was first in the Navy he was an electrician, but after a while, he realized he was an electrician on a warship and those are two different occupations.

While the ship only set Cond II damage control for watch standing during the engagements. Material condition Zebra was set the entire time. Material condition zebra being set was a constant reminder of the threat environment and previous engagement.

Are there any official or unofficial lessons learned or documents that would be helpful to develop this case study?

He did not recall any official lessons learned or documents that detailed the situation.

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APPENDIX Q. INTERVIEW WITH JEFF SWAIM

Interview conducted with Jeff Swaim. This interview was conducted via email on 16 February 2022 and via phone on 23 February 2022. Jeff Swaim served on USS *Mason* as the Operations Officer and was the Tactical Action officer during the third engagement.

Did any of the crew members leave the deployment early? If so, why did they leave early?

Generally speaking, any stories of sailors asking to “leave the ship” I have only heard from second or third-hand sources, none of which were part of the crew. My personal opinion is that a lot of those sorts of stories are either made up or greatly embellished. I once heard the former CO of SWOS tell BDOC students (during an all hands briefing) that *Mason* sailors cried out “this wasn’t what we signed up for!” when faced with the stress of combat; frustratingly, that version of events felt very made-up, something the SWOS CO was pulling out of thin air to prove whatever point he was making. My own experiences with the ship’s crew were quite the opposite.

I too did hear about some crew members wanting to return to the ship early from leave, etc., however I can’t recall “who” specifically, and don’t remember arranging any specific pax transfers outside of what was operationally scheduled. Thinking back (and I’m trying to remember here) the top snipe being off the ship does ring a bell, though *I think* we weren’t able to get him back until after the attacks. I can’t recall if he shortened his leave for this or not. I do recall him voicing frustration that he wasn’t onboard for the attacks, as he wished he could have been there to help.

Between the first and second attacks we did have a planned pax transfer which occurred after a RAS in the Gulf of Aden, on 12 Oct, for regular PGs/PLs. No one left that wasn’t a scheduled PL; notably our P-XO arrived that day. As the ship’s OPS I was part of every pax transfer on or off the ship, and to my knowledge no one had asked for a transfer, nor was transferred, due to anxiety (after the first attack). Please keep in mind however that if someone went directly to the CO, CMC, or CHAPS with this sort of thing, I may not have known about it until it reached the level of “OPS please schedule a pax transfer.” But

throughout our time in the Red Sea during CO/DH meetings when we discussed crew morale, no requests of this nature were voiced.

What other information would be beneficial to developing a case study and allow the readers to feel they were present throughout the scenario?

There was one member of the HSM CEL who got transferred due to what I would consider combat-related stress. While the CAR write up & other event summaries cover the missile attacks, there were significant other combat-related events/incidents which occurred between each; sometime between 9–15 Oct, while this person was flying a recon mission close to the Yemense coastline, their helicopter's missile detection system went off due to an RPG being fired at them, which required evasive air tactics. Afterwards I was told by our airboss that this pilot was having a hard time dealing with the high level of stress; he consequently had an alcohol-related incident during our first liberty port after the attacks (Greece, around 23 Oct), and was transferred off the ship.

Also- we had a USCG AIT (Advanced Interdiction Team) embarked at the time, because we had been doing anti piracy ops before getting sent to the BAM (we were literally in the middle of a boarding in HOA when we were told to make max speed towards the BAM). I recall them asking to disembark sometime during the week of the attacks, but this was mainly due to them being underutilized: when they weren't acting as lookouts, they had nothing to do (we/they were very eager to board multiple suspicious small boats throughout the week of the attacks, and each time were told "no" by higher authorities). I believe they asked once to disembark, which we conducted along with the CDS-50 disembark as an operational/scheduled transfer when we left the Red Sea (not due to personnel issues). I only mention this for completeness.

Over the phone Jeff Swaim talked to me in detail about how sailors struggled with the "why" of the mission after the 2nd attack. His description meticulously took me through the ups and downs of the culture onboard USS *Mason*. We also discussed the process for awards and recognition after the event, or lack there off. At that point he provide me with a print copy of the combat action ribbon citation.

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