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**A REEXAMINATION OF ETHICS TRAINING
AND EDUCATION FOR ENLISTED MARINES**

by

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June 2022

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**A REEXAMINATION OF ETHICS TRAINING AND EDUCATION
FOR ENLISTED MARINES**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The Marine Corps is implementing many new capabilities and changing its force design to meet future challenges. One overlooked challenge that enlisted Marines will face in the future operating environment is ethical decision-making. Enlisted Marines make up the bulk of the Marine Corps, and evidence shows they are the most likely to engage in unethical behavior. So to prevent the next Haditha massacre or Taliban urination incident, they need to be more consistently trained and educated in ethics. The current ethics training and education regimen that enlisted Marines undergo is missing essential elements. After analyzing the current ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines, I conclude that a more effective ethics training and education regimen should include mandatory unit-level implementation, education that incorporates behavioral ethics, and training that incorporates ethical decision-making with regular reminders of one's moral fiber. The desired outcomes are that rules are followed and character is developed through habituation, that Marines gain understanding of why people make good and bad ethical decisions, and that Marines experience dissonance and develop ethically sound action scripts. Adversaries can globally broadcast the Marine Corps' ethical failures and create strategic implications to a degree that has never been seen. There is no more critical time than now for the Marine Corps to address this important gap.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACMC	Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps
BITS	Back in the Saddle
CGF	Computer Generated Forces
CY	Calendar Year
DON	Department of the Navy
IIT	Infantry Immersion Trainer
JAG	Judge Advocate Group
LEAD	Leadership Education and Development
MAI	Martial Arts Instructor
MAW	Marine Air Wing
MCMAP	Marine Corps Martial Arts Program
MCT	Marine Combat Training
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
NCIS	Naval Criminal Investigative Service
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PME	Professional Military Education
POI	Period of Instruction
ROE	Rules of Engagement
SNCO	Staff Non-Commissioned Officer
TBS	The Basic School
TDK	Tactical Decision Kit
USNA	United States Naval Academy

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I would like to thank Dr. Paolo Tripodi at Marine Corps University for providing context and clarity on the important issue of ethics training and education for enlisted Marines, which provided the necessary insight needed to conduct further research and ultimately complete this research capstone. I would also like to thank CAPT Kevin Mullaney, PhD, for his guidance and mentorship as my advisor, and Dr. Paul Lester at the Naval Postgraduate School for also serving as my advisor. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife for being so patient and understanding as I spent many hours locked away completing this work while she took care of our kids. Thank you.

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I. INTRODUCTION

“Given the centrality of tactical ethics to winning our fights and caring for our people, ethical training should not be separated from operational training.”

—Nathaniel Fick, in Dick Couch’s *A Tactical Ethic*, Forward

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

1. An Issue Worth Examining

Brigadier General George Rowell (USMC) made an important observation in his strategy research project entitled *Marine Corps Values-Based Ethics Training: A Recipe to Reduce Misconduct* in which he stated, “Although we lack a reliable quantitative measure of individual (much less organizational) ethics, or an objective standard to track changes in the ethical condition of an organization over time, this measurement deficiency cannot be taken as evidence that all is well within an organization” (2012, p. 6). My goal for this research capstone is not to prove that the current enlisted ethics training and education regimen is inadequate but rather to query in order to change thoughts and opinions and to provide recommendations for improvement throughout the Marine Corps. This issue is important to me because I am a prior enlisted officer (Private-Staff Sergeant, 2003–2013) and I have had the rare experience of seeing the differences in which enlisted Marines and Officers are trained and educated in ethics, and I believe that the Marine Corps can do better.

From the time that I was an enlisted Marine, I can recall the ethics training and education that I received in recruit training, military occupational specialty (MOS) school, and during professional military education (PME) courses. The training was rules based and taught us what our left and right lateral limits were. Additional ethics training and education received while serving in the fleet consisted of mandatory briefs once a year during back in the saddle training (BITS), rules of engagement (ROE) briefs from our unit judge advocate group (JAG), and occasional ethics stand downs that were reactive in

nature. After having conducted extensive research on this topic, I have concluded that the current regimen for enlisted ethics training and education remains largely the same; I would like to help change that.

The current ethics training and education regimen that enlisted Marines undergo is missing essential elements and could stand to be enhanced in order meet the demands of the future operating environment. From my perspective, it is not necessary to halt and/or deem the current enlisted ethics training and education regimen obsolete; however, there are some different ideas and approaches to ethics that may be in the best interest of the Marine Corps. Based on the research that I conducted for this capstone, I have concluded that a more effective ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines should include the following missing elements: mandatory unit level implementation, education that incorporates behavioral ethics, and training that incorporates ethical decision making with regular reminders of one's moral fiber. Each of these elements will be examined throughout this capstone.

2. Beyond Being at War

Marines often speak highly of one another and it is generally understood that the Marine Corps is an organization of men and women of character who believe in and live out their core values of honor, courage, and commitment on a daily basis. However, it would be disingenuous to ignore challenges facing the Marine Corps, including the unacceptably high rates of behaviors that are not aligned with the organizations stated values. Most of the undesirable behavior reported in recent years occurs occurred in garrison, not combat. Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF) have been over for some time, and the amount of exposure to kinetic combat for Marines is currently minimal. Writing about this topic now differs from what Brigadier General Rowell wrote about in 2013 where he stated, "The ethics of the military forces of the United States, including the Marine Corps, have degraded in the past decade due to ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other global commitments. This degradation is reflected in abuses in combat as well as sexual assault, suicide, and other misconduct" (Rowell, 2013, Abstract). Although he made a compelling argument at the time, I wonder

why we are still seeing so much bad behavior from Marines, most of which comes from the junior enlisted Marines who have spent no part of their career in a combat environment. The likely answer is that the training and education they receive in ethics may not be as effective as it is intended to be. The majority of these enlisted Marines are young, their pre-frontal cortexes (the part of their brain's that drives moral decision making) are not fully developed (and will not be until the latter half of their twenties), and their youthfulness "makes them more susceptible to many ethical and criminal failures" (Rowell, 2013, p. 19). While there is no way to completely curb misconduct in an organization as large as the Marine Corps, something has to change in the way that these young men and women are thinking, otherwise we can expect to see the numbers continue to trend in the wrong direction.

3. Crash Courses Are Not Enough

It has been my observation that because of the amount of undesirable unethical behavior that has occurred and continues to occur within the Marine Corps, both in garrison and in combat, that said training and education may not be adequate and could stand to be enhanced. Training in the schoolhouse is not enough, and "in order to succeed, ethical training must be a component of the tactical training that happens each day in small units throughout the military" (Couch, 2010, Forward). Enlisted Marines constitute the majority of the Marine Corps, and the evidence shows that they are the most likely to engage in unethical behavior. The 2017 Department of the Navy Annual Crime Report concluded that the common subject traits for sexual assaults in the Marine Corps were active duty males between the rank of E-3 and E-5 ages 19–24 (DON Annual Crime Report, 2017, p. 44). The same report concluded that the average rank of active duty USMC subjects who were involved in narcotics offenses fell within the E-1 to E-3 rank group and the average age ranged between 21 and 25 years old (DON Annual Crime Report, 2017, p. 54). Active duty personnel in the enlisted ranks E-1 to E-6 comprised approximately 62 percent of the subjects involved in procurement fraud incidents affecting the USMC (DON Annual Crime Report, 2017, p. 58). The 2020 DOD Hazing Report concluded that the majority of the substantiated offenders were enlisted males, 78% of which fell between the ranks of E-1 and E-4 (DOD Hazing Report, 2020, p. 26). Based on these annual reports, it is clear that

something has to change with respect to the way enlisted Marines think about ethics. An enhancement of the current ethics training and education regimen will not eliminate this type of undesired behavior, but it may reduce it.

B. INITIAL FINDINGS

In beginning my research, I leveraged Brigadier General Rowell's strategy research project and concur with his assessment that junior Marines need to build their character, and that the Marine Corps needs to get away from rules based ethics training only. He referenced the Haditha Massacre, the Taliban urination incident, and multiple garrison ethics violations in which the accused were mostly enlisted Marines. His main argument is that enlisted Marines are primarily taught rules-based ethics with a small amount of values based ethics. Most of the ethics training and education that they receive comes in small doses during their professional military education (PME) courses that are not attended regularly. "Rules-based ethics training is appropriate for enlisted Marines," "However, when ethics training only addresses conduct, the Marine Corps misses an opportunity to arm Marines with more meaningful knowledge" (Rowell, 2012, p. 16). In conjunction with rules-based ethics training and education, enlisted Marines are exposed to a limited amount of values based ethics training and education "which seeks to sharpen the morals of the educated in order to arm them with the character required to make correct decisions in ambiguous situations" (Rowell, 2012, p. 12). From his report, I deduced that young enlisted Marines are not simply rule followers, but are decision makers themselves who can be placed in situations in which they will have their character tested. The Marine Corps has to be able to send a force forward that has the right character and judgment to do what is right not just because they are told to, but because they want to. Knowing that his assessment was a decade old and that the ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines still remains largely the same, I worked to identify what specifically was missing and what needs to change.

C. GAINING PERSPECTIVE

Captain Paul Zimmerman, currently the 17th Company Officer at the United States Naval Academy, examined the topic of ethics training and education for enlisted Marines while participating in the LEAD program and was very helpful. Captain Zimmerman's previous work on the topic suggested that junior enlisted Marines are given all the right tools to be tactically successful, but when it comes to ethics they are ill equipped. This led him to examine some tech routes that the Marine Corps could potentially use to provide real time ethical decision making training for enlisted Marines. Based off of his insights, I examined the tactical decision kit and use of HoloLens augmented reality to facilitate unique and beneficial training through interactive sand table exercises and tactical decision games. Further, I examined the use of the infantry immersion trainer to facilitate ethical decision making training within an immersive training environment by incorporating CGF, live, augmented, and virtual reality. Captain Zimmerman also introduced me to the senior ethics chair at Marine Corps University, Dr. Paulo Tripodi and permanent military professor in the Leadership Ethics and Law department at the United States Naval Academy CAPT Kevin Mullaney, who is now my thesis advisor for this capstone.

1. Marine Corps University and College of Enlisted Military Education

Dr. Paulo Tripodi at Marine Corps University and I spoke several times throughout my research, and he provided me with multiple sources for use, namely his article from the U.S. Army War College Quarterly: Parameters entitled *Casualties of Their Own Success: The 2011 Urination Incident in Afghanistan*, a copy of the *Command Investigation Into the Alleged Desecration of Corpses by U.S. Marines in Afghanistan*. Additionally, he turned me onto the topic of behavioral ethics and provided me his peer reviewed journal article via the Defense Technical Information Center entitled, "Behavioral Ethics: The Missing Piece of an Integrative Approach to Military Ethics." Once I became aware of behavioral ethics, I was intrigued and examined further information on the topic from the University of Texas, Ethics Unwrapped site. Dr. Tripodi introduced me to the Dean of Academics at the College of Enlisted Military Education (CEME), Mr. James Cohn. Mr. Cohn provided me with all of the programs of instruction for each professional military education course

that enlisted Marines attend. Lastly, Dr. Tripodi informed me that outside of all of the enlisted PME schools in the Marine Corps, he worked on the development of unit requested ethics courses that are administered by mobile training teams from his team at MCU. All of the information and resources that Dr. Tripodi provided were instrumental to the completion of this capstone.

D. THE FUTURE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The Marine Corps is currently undergoing major changes and “new threats, new missions, and new technologies require us to adjust our organizational design and modernize our capabilities.” (Commandant’s Planning Guidance, 2019, p. 11) Our enlisted Marines could be expected to make ethical decisions alone and unafraid to a degree that has never been asked of them. While the planning guidance does discuss our core values and the ethical issues of sexual assault, drug use, and hazing, a renewed focus on ethics training and education are not mentioned. It is my belief that the Marine Corps should implement a far more robust ethics training and education regimen for its enlisted Marines than what is currently in place, especially while serving in garrison. This must be done proactively and be conducted more often than just once a year at BITS or during PME. Such few formal reminders of one’s own military ethics are not sufficient to meet the demands of the future operating environment. One significant ethical mistake could cost the Marine Corps dearly in accomplishing its mission, and it behooves the Marine Corps to get in front of this now instead of reacting later.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. BACKGROUND

There should be a distinction between different types of ethics training and education that enlisted Marines undergo and it is important to recognize that rules based ethics training and education alone may not be adequate enough to sufficiently prevent unethical behavior. Brigadier General George Rowell's strategy research project highlights the lack of sufficient values-based ethics training for enlisted Marines, and calls for an overhaul of the ethics training approach that existed in the Marine Corps at the time (2013). He points out that USMC Officers undergo mostly values based/character development style ethics training and education, and that enlisted Marines should receive the same level and type as the Officers. His main point is that enlisted Marines comprise the bulk of the force and are most likely to be the ones who commit an unethical act that may have strategic implications in a future conflict (Rowell, 2013).

B. HIGH RATES OF UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIOR IN GARRISON

One way to highlight the ineffectiveness of having a primarily rules based ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines is to lay out the amounts and different types of undesirable behavior being committed each year. The Department of the Navy, 2020 Annual Crime Report, via the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), highlights that over the last five years, the number of DON offenses increased by 12% (Annual Crime Report, 2020, p. 3). The report specifically examines death, adult sexual assault, child sex abuse and exploitation, narcotics, and procurement fraud, which are all matters of ethically (and morally) unacceptable behavior in the eyes of the Marine Corps. Although the report provides data that the Marine Corps had decreases in some of the aforementioned activities in 2020, there were increases in others. For example, deaths went up 8% for the Department of the Navy, with suicides increasing in the Marine Corps by 38% (Annual Crime Report, 2020, p. 14).

Brigadier General Rowell pointed out in his journal that sexual assaults were an issue in the Marine Corps in 2011 and 2012, with 348 cases being reported in 2011 and an expected increase of 10% in 2012. 48% of the 348 accused in 2011 were “E-1 to E-4, 25% were E-5 to E-9, 16% were unknown, and less than 5% were commissioned or warrant officers” (Rowell, 2013, p. 8). Just a few years later, the NCIS Department of the Navy Annual Crime Report determined that “in CY 2017, 1,565 adult sexual assault incidents were reported in the DON, with 553 of these reports affecting the USMC” (2017 DON Annual Crime Report, p. 44). The 2020 NCIS DON Annual Crime Report determined that in 2020 there were 1399 cases reported sexual assault, with 527 affecting the Marine Corps. It should be noted that 2020 numbers actually decreased 10% from 2019 (2020 DON Annual Crime Report, p. 16). Sexual assault cases within the DON peaked in 2018 and sparked force-wide stand downs and major addressment of the issue. Since then, sexual assaults have steadily declined throughout both the Navy and the Marine Corps due to near continuous attention being brought to the issue for roughly two years. Those constant reminders not to engage in such behavior resulted in a drop in reported cases. The data suggest that these efforts are gradually making a difference and that similar results in other ethical areas might also be produced should the Marine Corps decide to place a stronger emphasis on them.

“Over the last five years, the number of DON offenses increased by 12%” (DON Annual Crime Report, 2020, p. 3). Specifically for 2019–2020, “increases were noted in 3 crime categories: Death, Narcotics, and Procurement Fraud. Narcotics (54%) and Adult Sexual Assault (29%) accounted for 83% of the reported offenses. The DON had 1 case involving murder-Suicide in 2020 versus 5 in 2019. Both Adult Sexual Assault and Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation decreased in 2020. The most prevalent drug of choice was marijuana; however, there was an increase in LSD use/possession and distribution. The most common Procurement-related fraud incidents involved Product Substitution, General Procurement, and Conflicts of Interest” (DON Annual Crime Report, 2020, p. 1). The numbers do differ between the Navy and the Marine Corps, and rightfully so given the size differences between the two organizations.

For the Marine Corps specifically, suicides increased from 2019–2020 by 39% (DON Annual Crime Report, 2020, p. 11), narcotics offenses increased from 1,360 cases in 2019 to 1460 in 2020 (DON Annual Crime Report, 2020, p. 23), and although the Corps saw decreases in reported cases of sexual assault, murder, child sexual abuse and exploitation, and procurement fraud, they are still ethical issues plaguing the Corps every day (see Figure 1). It should be noted that Covid 19 likely had an effect on 2020 reported cases of criminal activity for a variety of reasons.

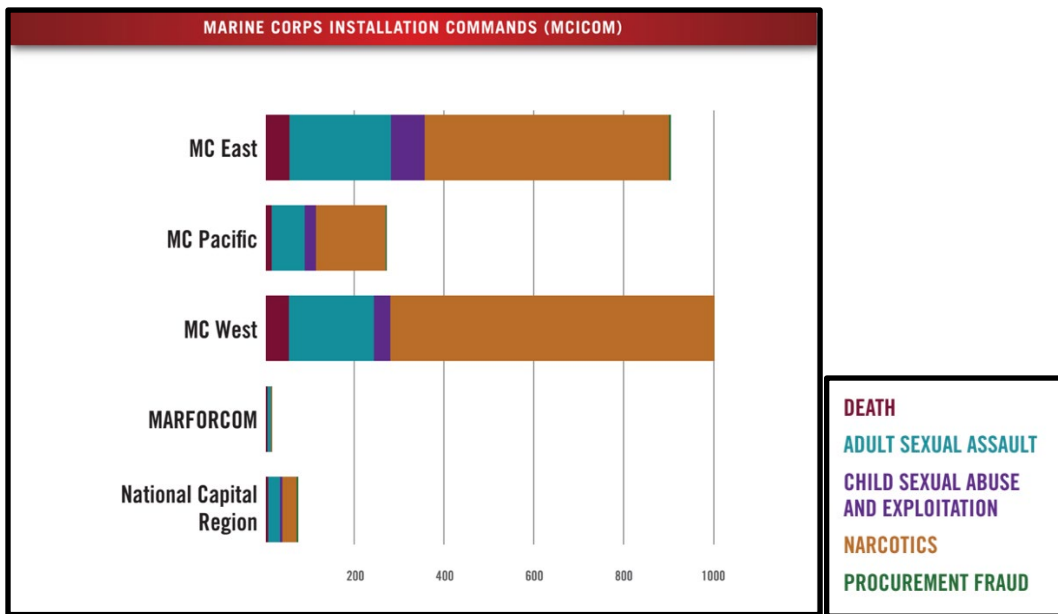


Figure 1. 2020 Crime Trends in the Marine Corps by Installation Command.
Source: DON Annual Crime Report (2020, p. 10).

The Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report for Hazing Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces provides data on each branch of the armed forces with respect to hazing. The report articulates that the Marine Corps has a major hazing problem as compared to the other branches, and the primary participants are young enlisted Marines. Hazing has been a problem in the Marine Corps for over 60 years, and “received 152 hazing complaints during FY 2020” alone (DOD Hazing Report, 2020, p. 24). This is noteworthy because the Marine Corps reported significantly more cases of hazing than all of the other services combined, with the Army reporting just 7 cases, and the Navy and Air Force

reporting 12 cases each. Considering the size difference between the Marine Corps all of the other services, this is significant. Marines are taught from day one of recruit training that hazing is not tolerated in the Marine Corps, yet we continue to see the highest numbers in the DOD every year. This is a cultural problem.

C. AN ALARMING REALITY

Lessons learned from the Taliban urination incident indicate that our future successes or failures in combat will come down to Marines maintaining “a balancing act between lethality and restraint” (Couch, 2013, Preface XVIII). Such restraint cannot be taught through periodic crash courses in ethics, which are the norm throughout the Marine Corps. To take this a step further, Third Battalion Second Marine Regiment (3/2), the unit from which the Taliban urination incident occurred, implemented an ethical warrior program prior to their deployment to Afghanistan in 2011 with the intent of “developing high performing individuals and small units who are morally, psychologically, and emotionally resilient in order to operate, live, and thrive on an austere battlefield defined by fog, friction, and severe stress” (Tripodi, *Casualties of their own success*, 2017, p. 68). One could assume that such a program would arm the units Marines with the tools necessary to facilitate appropriate behavior in combat, however, “after the battalion deployed to Afghanistan, the overall strength of the command climate eroded,” (Tripodi, *Casualties of their own success*, 2017, p. 75), which resulted in a horrific event that garnered international attention: “On 10 January 2012, a video depicting four Marines urinating on three corpses was posted to a YouTube internet account by user “semperfilonevoice.”

A Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) investigation identified the Marines urinating in the video, as well as the videographer. The video was made during a 27 July 2011 operation in, Helmand Province, Afghanistan” (Command Investigation, 2012). Members of team 4, Scout Sniper Platoon 3/2 (a sub unit of Kilo Company, 3/2), were the individuals who committed this act, and it was well known throughout the battalion leading up to the incident that they lacked discipline. The command investigation noted that “there was a high turnover rate in the chain of command,” and “turnover of key leadership billets

within Kilo Company, immediately before and during deployment in Afghanistan,” and that that “contributed to an environment where necessary discipline standards were lacking” (Command Investigation, 2012). Concerns about the state of discipline in the platoon were raised but were overshadowed by the tactical success that the platoon was having on the deployment. The combination of these factors seemingly rendered the battalion ethical warrior program ineffective, and this is a prime example of why there needs to be constant emphasis on ethics training and education for enlisted Marines that cannot be allowed to fade. When the topic of ethics is allowed to fade away and become an afterthought, episodes like the Taliban urination incident can result and that is not something the Marine Corps can afford to see happen again in a future conflict.

While pondering how a strong unit like 3/2 could fall victim to such an ethical disaster, I wondered what might have been going through the heads of those young enlisted Marines and how they could have convinced themselves that what they were doing was acceptable. Dr. Paolo Tripodi, Ethics Chair at Marine Corps University wrote that “a growing body of research into ethical behavior and decision making, clearly indicates that individuals confronted with ethical choices have a tendency to behave in a significantly less rational way than expected, or not rationally at all. Often their decisions are in direct conflict with their values and their training. Looking at decisions and behaviors from outside a situation, other easily and clearly see the ethical dimension and implications; yet such clarity for those immersed in the situation might be compromised” (Tripodi, *Casualties of their own success*, 2017, p. 71). The key takeaway is that good people do bad things, and often times they will simultaneously attempt to convince themselves that they are good and that their behavior is ok. It is an odd phenomenon that exists far beyond the military that is not necessarily about being bad, but being human (Ariely, 2015).

Gaining buy in with respect to ethical thinking and decision making at the lowest levels of a unit should be the goal of an effective ethics program. Dick Couch’s: *A Tactical Ethic*, examines the importance of battlefield ethics in an insurgency environment and highlights how critically important they are to winning (or losing) the battle for hearts and minds. Couch explains that similar atrocities that occurred in Vietnam also occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan. He focuses primarily on ethical conduct at the squad and platoon level,

specifically for the enlisted. He argues that there is a need for a bottom-up approach to tactical ethics instead of top-down, and that the military needs an overhaul in this department. He discusses that we live in an unprecedented technological era in which the internet and smart devices can be weaponized by our adversaries to exploit our military personnel and their conduct.

The importance of maintaining a consistent and robust ethics training and education regimen at the unit level cannot be overstated. Dr. Paolo Tripodi, the lead ethics chair at the Marine Corps University, along with his fellow colleague David Todd, published an article in 2017 via the U.S. Army War College entitled, *Casualties of Their Own Success: The 2011 Urination Incident in Afghanistan*. Their article “explores the individual, situational, and system roles influencing the 2011 incident in which a small unit of U.S. Marine scout snipers urinated on three Taliban corpses. Without absolving individual responsibility, the authors emphasize a strong command climate is the most important influence behind ethical and professional behavior” (Todd & Tripodi, 2017, Abstract). This is relevant because it argues the unique point that although the unit commander directed his Marines and Sailors participate in a unit led ethical warrior program that incorporated “ethics instruction in every aspect of training, and to conduct two hours of focused ethical instruction every week” (Todd & Tripodi, 2017, p. 68), he still ended up with a major incident occurring on his watch. The article specifically discusses weak standards in the sniper platoon and a degrading command climate that was tolerated because the platoon was proficient and effective at what they did. The authors’ main point is that along with strong ethics training and education in a unit, there must also be a strong and healthy command climate that is never compromised; The two go hand in hand. Additionally, Dr. Tripodi provided me with a copy of the unclassified version of the command investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding a video depicting U.S. Marines urinating on corpses in Afghanistan. The investigation breaks down the command climate of 3/2, provides a detailed analysis of everything that took place before, during, and after the incident, and can be used as a case study for other units.

D. POTENTIAL FRAMEWORKS

While it is important to continue to train and educate Marines in both rules based and values based ethics, research indicates that this may not be enough and that “behavioral ethics should be integrated into the military ethical training and education endeavor and is most impactful when it is taught experientially” (Todd and Tripodi, 2018, p.155). Behavioral ethics “focuses on how and why individuals make the decisions they do in the ethical realm,” and “is descriptive rather than prescriptive” (Todd & Tripodi, 2018, p.157). Behavioral ethics training and education is not currently taught in the Marine Corps, but may be the key to getting Marines to think more carefully before making difficult ethical decisions, and would be best implemented at the unit level. “The study of behavioral ethics largely focuses upon these situational factors which, the evidence indicates, can overwhelm a person’s character” (Prentice, *Ethics Unwrapped*, 2022). With behavioral ethics exists an opportunity to build into future training and education how and why good people decide to do bad things in order to create a shift in the way people think about ethically challenging situations that they might face. Research shows that this type of training and education has a more positive effect on peoples ethical decision making calculus (Prentice, *Ethics Unwrapped*, 2022).

CAPT Kevin Mullaney and Matt Regan’s 2019 journal article entitled, *One Minute in Haditha: Ethics and Non-Conscious Decision-Making*, examines the conduct of Sergeant Frank Wuterich who “fired on and killed five unarmed Iraqi men standing by a car near the site of an improvised explosive device explosion” (Mullaney and Regan, 2019, Abstract) that occurred moments earlier. The IED destroyed a vehicle in Sergeant Wuterich’s convoy (that he was leading), and killed one of the Marines inside. The article analyzes Sergeant Wuterich’s conduct as a rapid non-conscious response, explains his actions through the recognition primed decision model, and provides some perspective on the psychological processes that one might experience in combat (Mullaney and Regan, 2019, Abstract). The article ventures into moral psychology and sets the stage for the discussion of including behavioral ethics as part of the ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines.

Authors David Todd and Paolo Tripodi's 2018 journal article entitled, *Behavioral Ethics: The Missing Piece of an Integrative Approach to Military Ethics*, explores the expanding field of behavioral ethics and argues that the topic be integrated into military ethical training and education. The authors argue that "even those who have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are committed to do right, make unethical choices" (Todd and Tripodi, 2018, p. 157). They describe behavioral ethics as being focused on "how and why individuals make the decisions they do in the ethical realm," (Todd and Tripodi, 2018, p. 157) and argue that military personnel could potentially be better armed to make sound ethical decisions by being trained and educated in behavioral ethics in conjunction with traditional methods. The difference is that the majority of ethics training and education in the Marine Corps is either rules based and character based and does not go into the cognitive science.

Frank Tortorello and Paolo Tripodi's 2015 technical report entitled, *We Can Do What's Easy or We Can Do What's Right: A Preliminary Report on Leaders' Perspectives on Ethical Failures in the United States Marine Corps*, examines different themes voiced by 31 Marines who participated in a study on how they saw ethics training and education as well as ethical failures within the Marine Corps at the time (2015). They argue that the report "can be used to scope the problem and further define efforts for more research," (Tortorello and Tripodi, 2015, p. 2) in order to improve ethics training and education throughout the Marine Corps. The sample of Marines who participated in the study was small, but some of the themes and views expressed are consistent and commonplace throughout the Corps. Instead of just brainstorming up new ways to train, educate, and behave, this report presents some specific ideas for how we can improve enlisted ethics training and education.

An interesting point made by participants "emphasized two areas that are important, but missing, from current education and training: how a good Marine leader can make a fair and just decision about supposedly unethical action and how good Marines actually do the right thing" (Tortorello and Tripodi, 2015, p. 7) The key point is that the majority of ethics training scenarios discussed by Marines are negative not positive. Perhaps some Marines just do not know what right looks like and could benefit from being walked

through good decision making processes of others. This is another example of how behavioral ethics could be implemented into ethics training and education. The article further recommends that the Marine Corps should “revamp its fundamental approach to ethics education and training by constructing scenarios based on real-life issues faced by Marines, and that the scenarios “could be rank and MOS appropriate and designed for use by small groups of Marines in discussion with leaders” (Tortorello and Tripodi, 2015, p. 13). Together, these recommendations support mandatory unit level implementation, education that incorporates behavioral ethics, and training that incorporates ethical decision making with regular reminders of one’s moral fiber.

An article written in 2007 during the Iraq war entitled, *Battlefield ethics. Traumatology*, examines “ethical behavior associated with the treatment of insurgents and noncombatants, battlefield ethical actions and decisions associated with perceived rules of engagement, reporting of violation of such rules, and battlefield ethics training.” These four areas were “assessed using either a five- or six-item questionnaire” (Castro & McGurk, 2007, p. 24) that were taken by both soldiers and Marines. “The uniquely developed ethics questions” in said questionnaires “addressed four main areas: attitudes regarding treatment of insurgents and noncombatants, battlefield ethical actions and decisions, reporting ethics violations, and battlefield ethics training” (Castro & McGurk, 2007, p. 24). Although high numbers of Marines and Soldiers who took the questionnaires reported that they had received ethics training prior to conducting combat deployments, less than half of them reported that they believed noncombatants deserved to be treated respect and dignity. Additionally, over a third of the reportees believed that torture would be acceptable under various circumstances. This may suggest that the type of ethics education and/or training that Marines and Soldiers were receiving at the time was not meeting its intent, and that perhaps a different approach was and is necessary. There are a few suggestions for improving battlefield ethics training at the end of the article, but it really only scratches the surface.

“Effectiveness of Battlefield-Ethics Training During Combat Deployment: A Program Assessment,” is a follow-up piece to the Battlefield Ethics article by Castro and McGurk and the Mental Health Assessment Team’s findings. The thesis of the article is

that, “breakdowns in the ethical conduct of soldiers towards non-combatants on the battlefield are of grave concern in war and that evidence-based training approaches to prevent unethical conduct are scarce” (Warner, Appenzeller, Mobbs, Parker, Grieger, and Hoge, 2011, p. 1).

The authors “assessed the effectiveness of battlefield-ethics training and factors associated with unethical battlefield conduct,” and concluded that “leader-led battlefield ethics training positively influenced soldiers’ understanding of how to interact with and treat non-combatants, and reduced reports of ethical misconduct” (Warner, Appenzeller, Mobbs, Parker, Grieger, and Hoge, 2011, p. 1). Unethical battlefield conduct was associated with high-intensity combat but not with PTSD. This article argues that typical crash course ethics sessions are ineffective, and uses statistical regressions to show tangible survey results for how soldiers felt about a number of ethics related questions before and after battlefield-ethics training during combat deployment. This is a framework that could potentially be used by the Marine Corps at the unit level to help prevent Marines (especially enlisted Marines) from making unethical decisions. This could be employed by implementing a mandatory unit level ethics training and education program that is not allowed to become an afterthought or fade away.

4th Marine Air Wing (MAW) created a Combat and Operational Stress Control Program that highlights the importance of warrior focused ethics training for each Marine. “This program used a pedagogy of telling stories to challenge and guide Marines and Sailors in making exemplary ethical and effective decisions. The basis for instruction is an adaptation of the precepts of the Josephson Institute of Ethics” (Juergen, Pankurst, and Hogg, 2007). Additionally, 4th MAW used their own Ethics Discussion Guide to facilitate thought provoking guided discussions about various ethical dilemmas. The vignettes used during these discussions were designed to get the participating Marines to examine the role that their “ethics and core values play” in helping them make “exemplary ethical and effective decisions” (Juergen, Pankurst, and Hogg, 2007). Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) tie ins are mentioned in this document as a potential venue for facilitating these types of discussions. Unfortunately, based off of my own personal observations, MCMAP tie ins are an afterthought and based on my 19 years of experience

as a Marine and certification as a Black Belt Martial Arts Instructor (MAI), I can say that MCMAP is viewed with a check in the box mentality by many Marines.

E. ADMITTING THE TRUTH

Professor of Philosophy and Human Behavior at Duke University, Dan Ariely and his team conducted a series of social experiments that produced many valid observations about human rationality/irrationality that are helpful in understanding unethical behavior like that of the Marines who participated in the Taliban urination incident (Ariely, 2015). Specifically, they examined dishonesty, highlighting Enron, World Com, the financial crisis, professional sports, steroids, doping, torture, weapons of mass destruction, NSA collection on Americans, and more. Their goal was to look at what causes dishonesty and attempt to identify how to curb it. Ariely explains in the film that most liars also think of themselves as honest wonderful people and that we are dishonest because we want to benefit selfishly. He refers to a term called the fudge factor, which he describes as, “the ability to misbehave and still think of ourselves as good people” (Ariely, 2015). This is something that I have witnessed throughout the Marine Corps for the last 19 years, and it is an issue that needs to be discussed throughout the force. We tell ourselves that Marines never lie, cheat, or steal, but that is simply not true.

One of the most important parts of Ariely’s film is the observation that organizations that have crash courses on ethics misbehave at a similar rate of those who do not, and that what really gets people to curb their dishonesty and unethical behavior are constant reminders of one’s own moral fiber. There are a number of examples in the film of how they did this while conducting experiments, and it is suggested that government organizations could design interventions that would be helpful in reducing unethical behavior at work and society more broadly (Ariely, 2015). By combining regular reminders of one’s own moral fiber with mandatory unit level behavioral ethics training and education, there exists an opportunity to make a difference in the amount of undesirable behavior seen across the Marine Corps. These ideas can be formulated into an actionable framework that could be easily implemented.

F. SUMMARY AND REVIEW OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Examining the effectiveness of ethics training and education throughout the Marine Corps has been done before, and there have been hefty responses during perceived periods of declining ethics as seen in 2012 when the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps General Amos, “ordered a Marine Corps wide stand-down to focus on the ethics of the entire force, with emphasis on leadership and accountability and an appeal to the Marine Corps’ core values of honor, courage and commitment” (Rowell, 2013, p. 6). From my perspective, such stand-down’s are reactive in nature and are only a temporary solution to a much larger problem. A portion of the problem is that rules based and values based ethics training and education are largely separated between enlisted and officers, and there is no real emphasis on what might be the missing link to all of this, and that is for our enlisted Marines to have an understanding of behavioral ethics.

Enlisted Marines are not currently being taught about the thought processes of others, both good and bad, and they should be. Perhaps the most important part of addressing ethics for enlisted Marines is examining the frequency and venues in which the Marines are trained. Annual training, PME schools, BITS are not enough, and for the most part only provide the education piece without the training that is needed to make a real impact. Guided discussions about articles and case studies are a good start but only scratch the surface. Ariely’s documentary proved the effectiveness of changing people’s unethical behavior and/or tendencies by simply reminding them of their moral fiber prior to participating in situations where one may have to make an ethical decision. I believe that this same idea could be implemented at the unit level in order to ensure that rules are followed and character is developed through habituation, Marines gain an understanding of why people make good and bad ethical decisions, and that Marines experience dissonance and develop ethically sound action scripts. Enlisted Marines achieving a combination of these three things are what I believe will make a palpable difference.

III. METHODOLOGY

Quantifying the quality of ethics training and education for enlisted Marines is difficult, so all of the research conducted for this capstone is qualitative in nature. I did not collect primary data and used all secondary data from others. Upon reviewing all of the sources that I encountered, I believe that my methodological approach for conducting this research was suitable for answering my research questions and is on par with others who have examined the topic of military ethics. I will analyze the current ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines and provide an assessment of how specific elements of what I believe make a more effective ethics training and education regimen are achieved or not achieved in each of the courses. By identifying gaps in the current curriculum, I will formulate a framework and make recommendations for improvement going forward. Table 1 depicts my frame of analysis and will be used to determine gaps and recommendations.

Table 1. Frame of Analysis

Missing Essential Elements of an Effective Ethics Training and Education Program for Enlisted Marines	Desired Outcomes
Mandatory unit level implementation	Rules are followed/character is developed through habituation
Education that incorporates behavioral ethics	Marines gain understanding of why people make good and bad ethical decisions
Training that incorporates ethical decision making with regular reminders of one's moral fiber	Marines experience dissonance and develop ethically sound action scripts

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IV. DATA AND ANALYSIS

A. CURRENT STATE OF ETHICS TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR ENLISTED MARINES

In order to identify gaps and provide recommendations for improvement, it is necessary to examine how the Marine Corps currently trains and educates its enlisted Marines in ethics. Beginning with recruit training, the Marine Corps recruit depot provides 31.5 hours of values based training and leadership (VBT/L) over 13 weeks that “includes instruction on the law of war, ethics, and core values; Senior Drill Instructors reinforce core values lessons when leading small group discussions” (3/2 Command Investigation, 2012). This is a Marines first exposure to ethics training and education outside of what they’ve been taught by their parents, school, sports teams, church, etc., and the intent of the training is getting basically trained Marines to embrace the core values make the transformation by the Marine Corp’s shared legacy (3/2 Command Investigation, 2012). Upon graduating from recruit training with a basic understanding of the core values and for many, a new identity, the Marines attend Marine Combat Training (MCT) at the School of Infantry in which they undergo 12 hours of VBT/L which includes instruction on ethics, combat stress, rules of engagement, the code of conduct, and cultural awareness (3/2 Command Investigation, 2012).

After graduating from recruit training and MCT, Marines attend their MOS schools and then report to their first units for duty in the fleet Marine force. While serving in the fleet, there is an annual ethics training requirement that is to be conducted online. From personal experience and observation, this requirement is something most Marines click through quickly and likely do not learn or retain much of value that will prevent them from acting unethically. Upon promotion to the rank of Lance Corporal, Marines are required to attend the Lance Corporal Leadership and Ethics Seminar in which they undergo a week-long in person course put on by various NCO’s and SNCO’s at their unit or from a neighbor unit. After examining the curriculum, I identified two ethics courses that comprise part of the seminar, specifically *Challenges* and *Ethical Leadership*. These courses cover the basic

ideas surrounding morals and ethics, physical vs. moral dilemmas, right vs. wrong, values and character, honor and integrity, etc.

While the students gain an education on important terms and concepts, they are also assigned a Marine Corps Gazette article entitled, “Conflicting Loyalties and the Marine NCO,” and are required to participate in a follow on guided discussion. While participating in the course entitled *Challenges*, the only ethics requirement in the course is to “discuss moral challenge,” and students are asked by the instructor to provide examples of moral challenges they face today in garrison and combat (Challenges, 2014). The only requirements for the course entitled *Ethical Leadership* are to define various ethics related terms in small groups, describe situations and examples of where their morals or ethics were tested while in the Marine Corps, and to answer four questions about the assigned article (Ethical Leadership, 2014).

Newly promoted Marine Corporals (E-4) are required to attend Corporals Course as their PME. The course itself is 14 training days in length and its primary focus is not ethics, nor does it need to be. However, the Corporals Course POI only references ethics education from Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 6–10 (Leading Marines) in which ethical behavior and decision making are only mentioned a total of six times: “Discuss MCWP 6-10 concepts focusing on the development of character leadership and professional ethics” (Corporals Course POI, 2022). The only ethical topics from MCWP 6-10 discussed in Corporals course are “HONOR: The bedrock of our character. The quality that guides Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior;” (MCWP 6-10, 2022) moral courage, and the 11 leadership principles.

In order for Marine Sergeant’s to be eligible for promotion to the next rank of Staff Sergeant, they are required to attend Sergeant’s School as their PME. One of the program outcomes from the Sergeant’s School POI is that the students will “be able to serve as ethical leaders, educated in the philosophies of Marine Corps leadership and the doctrinal publications which establish the basis for organizational values and ethics” (Sergeant’s School POI, 2019, p. 8). Two educational outcomes outlined in Leadership Philosophy section of the POI are that the students “discuss the importance of values, attitudes, and behavior in ethical decision making,” and “discuss ethical leadership and military law”

(Sergeant School POI, 2019, p. 10). A total of nine hours is spent on these two educational outcomes throughout the entirety of the four week course. The College of Enlisted Military Education's course entitled *Moral and Ethical Reasoning* is used to satisfy a portion of the nine hour requirement along with a 500 word essay to gauge the students understanding of the lesson's educational objectives: "Objective 1. Understand the elements of ethical decisions and actions: the individual, system, and situation. Objective 2. Define ethics and the applicability to the organization and command climate Objective 3. Understand the concepts of virtue ethics, deontology, and ethical theories Objective 4. Analyze the difference between personal and organizational values and their impact on various situations. Objective 5. Create a well-organized, clear, and concise essay appropriate to the intended audience and purpose" (Sergeant's School POI, 2019, p. 68). Furthermore, the students participate in ethics 1 and 2 readings and examine the Taliban Urination Incident case study. The students conduct two guided discussions that raise questions about what they should have taken away from the material. Some of the questions discussed are: "how are the ethical standards between Marines and civilians different? What factors lead to the different biases effecting our own ethical judgment? How can situations change our ethical values or moral reasoning? What can you provide to foster and promote ethical conduct within your unit" (Sergeant School POI, 2019, p. 68)?

The next enlisted PME course is for Staff Sergeant's that desire to be selected for promotion to the rank of Gunnery Sergeant. One of the program outcomes for the Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Career School is for those who attend to be able to "serve as ethical leaders, educated in the obstacles that affect Marine cohesion and compliance with organizational values and ethics, who recognize the responsibility of their grade to mentor junior enlisted as well as junior officers" (Career Course POI, 2020, p. 8). This differs from that of Sergeant School and specifically brings attention to the seniority of pay grade. One of the educational outcomes of the course is to "advise the commander during ethical dilemmas" (Career Course POI, 2020, p. 9). This is significant because it is now assumed that an enlisted professional at this paygrade desiring to be promoted to the next has a solid understanding of ethics that goes beyond just following the rules, and that they should be capable of covering the ethical blind spots of the commander.

In order to set the conditions for said educational outcome, the course requires that the students participate in a class on ethical leadership that is a continuation of the Sergeant's school curriculum that discusses personal and organizational ethics, ethical fading, and that ethics is more than just right versus wrong. Students are required to read ethics 1 and 2 (same readings as Sergeant's School and TBS) for this course and conduct guided discussions to address specific questions surrounding ethics: "How does your understanding of ethics impact your ability to develop character in your subordinates? Why does ethical fading occur, and how does it impact the culture of an individual unit? How does transactional leadership effect the dynamics of the group with regard to ethical conduct? How does transformational leadership effect the dynamics of the group with regard to ethical conduct? What factors lead to the different biases effecting ethical judgment" (Career Course POI, 2020, pp. 106–107)? Out of all the enlisted PME POI's, the Career Course POI is the first one to introduce the idea of the enlisted leader using their understanding of ethics to facilitate character building of junior enlisted Marines. Lastly, the students examine the Abu Ghraib case study and discuss ethical failures that occurred. Two objectives of examining the case study are as follows: "Analyze aspects of ethical dilemmas that impact the individual, situation, and the system," and "discuss the impact of individual leadership as it relates to the degradation of ethical conduct" (Career Course POI, 2020, p. 116). Students are made aware that they will need to be prepared to make difficult decisions when there is little to no oversight, and that they may be surrounded by others who support unethical conduct (Career Course POI, 2020, p. 116). This is an important lesson, but it is troubling that this is mentioned for the first time in enlisted PME in this course. Often times, Marines of much lesser grade and experience also find themselves in the same situation, and their Staff NCO's will not be around to ensure that they do the right thing. This is a gap that needs to be addressed, especially when looking at the disaggregated nature of expeditionary advanced base operations. Overall, the course has lots of potential to introduce more of the identified essential elements of an effective ethics training and education program into the curriculum, specifically with the Haditha case study.

The Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Advanced School POI provides all information pertaining to the training and education that Marine Gunnery Sergeant's undergo during the course, to include the current status of ethics training and education. One of the program outcomes for the course is for those who attend to be able to "serve as ethical leaders, educated in the obstacles that affect Marine cohesion and compliance with organizational values and ethics, who recognize the responsibility of their grade to mentor junior enlisted as well as junior officers" (Advanced School POI, 2022, p. 8). One of the educational outcomes of the course is to advise the commander during ethical dilemmas (Advanced School POI, 2022). The POI has the students reflect on the article, *Command Climate and Ethical Behaviors* by Brian Kerl. The Gunnery Sergeants are provided a class titled *Ethical Thinking*. The course highlights that Gunnery sergeants are entering the classroom with a fundamental understanding of ethics. The three primary components of this lesson are intelligent disobedience, moral courage, and ethical stewardship. These three components are meant to enable senior enlisted advisors to cultivate trust in a professional relationship. The students examine the Haditha case study, the Stanford prison experiment, and an article titled *The Gray Zone* by Seymour Kersh (Advanced School POI, 2022,).

In addition to the enlisted PME POI's, the Marine Corps University sends mobile training teams (MTT) to requesting units and conducts five day long periods of instruction on ethics that cover critical thinking, leadership lessons from a Medal of Honor recipient, moral reasoning, servant leadership, and ethical leadership in and out of combat. Throughout the week long MTT, the students conduct guided discussions, examine the documentary *The Boys of 36*, and use an audience response system called turning technology to survey students thoughts before, during, and after various lessons. The mobile training teams have provided instruction to over a thousand Marines since the program started (Tripodi, MTT Ethics Itinerary, 2022).

B. ANALYSIS TO FRAMEWORK

1. Summary of Findings

Beginning with recruit training and MCT, the ethics training and education provided there is mostly education, is primarily rules based, and is not designed to put the newly trained Marines' ethical decision making to the test. During recruit training and MCT, there is currently no behavioral ethics taught nor do any specific training events take place that force them to make ethical decisions on the spot. Recruits and MCT students are young and impressionable and could benefit greatly by coming out of their introductory training with a much stronger ethical decision making foundation that they will continue to develop at their units.

The Lance Corporal Leadership and Ethics Seminar is short and provides a very limited amount of actual ethics training and education despite the name of the seminar itself. Between the two ethics classes, there is no behavioral ethics being taught, meaning that the ethical thought processes, either good or bad, of some specific individual or group are not being walked through with the students. While reflecting on their own past experiences, the students likely experience some level of dissonance and recall their own action scripts, but they do no ethical decision making during the seminar. The gazette article coupled with some sort of individual case study could be an opportunity to introduce behavioral ethics into the curriculum followed by practical application in which the students are reminded of their moral fiber and subsequently required to make their own ethical decisions for a given scenario. Post scenario debriefs and reflection would be a great way to reinforce individual action scripts and increase the likelihood that they stick.

There are no essential elements of a more effective ethics training and education program for enlisted Marines built into Corporals Course. This is concerning because newly promoted Corporals are now non-commissioned officers with much more responsibility. Not having a major ethics training and education regimen built into the only PME school for that pay grade is a gap, especially since unit level ethics programs are not currently mandatory in the fleet.

Comparatively, Sergeant's School provides the most robust ethics training and education package to date for young enlisted Marines up to that point in their career. The emphasis on ethics and/or moral reasoning in PME courses prior to Sergeant School is minimal. In order to promote to the rank of Staff Sergeant, those enlisted Sergeants desiring promotion will have already reenlisted for another four years or may plan to in the near future. This is important to note because there is a correlation with the depth of ethics training and education being provided to a more mature and potentially careerist portion of the enlisted population. Although it is a good thing for Marine Sergeant's looking to potentially make a career out of the Marine Corps to receive such quality ethics training and education, it should not be ignored that nearly 75% of first term Marines exit the Marine Corps and choose not to re-enlist. Therefore, the majority of the Marine Corps' junior enlisted population will never receive anything even close to what the Sergeant School curriculum provides. Overall, Sergeant's School has great potential to incorporate behavioral ethics into the curriculum, especially with the Taliban urination incident. That case study could be enhanced to walk through the decision making processes of those involved and be followed up with practical application in which the students would be reminded of their moral fiber and subsequently be required to exercise their own ethical decision making.

The SNCO Career Course and Advanced Course have lots of potential to introduce more of the identified essential elements of an effective ethics training and education program into their curriculum, specifically with the use of case studies and guided discussions that could be augmented with behavioral ethics and reminders of moral fiber followed by ethical decision making training. Lastly, the ethics MTT's put on by Marine Corps University provide requesting units with an additional opportunity to train some of their Marines in ethics and are the only enlisted ethics courses in the Marine Corps that use turning technology, which is a real-time survey tool that displays results, to exercise ethical decision making. This is something that all of the PME courses containing ethics in their curriculum could adopt across the Marine Corps.

Overall, the biggest take away from examining the current regimen is that there is still no requirement for individual units to run a permanent ethics program. For Marines to only be exposed to the limited amount of ethics classes, cases studies, and guided discussions during their very periodic PME courses is the biggest gap of all. Not only do the courses themselves lack the elements of a more effective ethics training and education program (based on this analysis), they are also not producing the desired outcomes (i.e., rules are followed, character is developed through habituation, Marines gain an understanding of why people make good and bad ethical decisions, and Marines experiencing dissonance and developing ethically sound action scripts). In order to achieve the desired outcomes, a new framework needs to be implemented.

2. Recommended Framework Explained

When constructing a potential ethics training and education framework that could benefit the Marine Corps, I leveraged an article published in the Journal of Military Ethics written by CAPT Mullaney and fellow colleague Matt Regan entitled, *One Minute in Haditha: Ethics and Non-Conscious Decision-Making*. Based off of my understanding of behavioral ethics, the journal article provided an excellent example of a different way to examine the Haditha Massacre case study. While the article is focused on moral psychology, I found that it provided exactly what Dr. Tripodi and the University of Texas: Ethics Unwrapped site suggested be done when it comes to training people with behavioral ethics. By evaluating Sergeant Wuterich's thought processes through the recognition primed decision model, Marines could gain a better understanding of what he went through and potentially be better armed themselves in the future should they be faced with a difficult situation. This could be taught both at PME courses and at individual units. Furthermore, I used the two battlefield ethics articles and determined that their content relates directly to Dan Ariely's film in which his team concluded that regularly reminding people of their moral fiber is what gets them to not do bad things. Combining these ideas into one framework that can be used to augment existing ethics training and education at both PME courses and the unit level could be highly beneficial to the Marine Corps. Recommended framework is as follows in Table 2.

Table 2. Recommended Framework

Missing Essential Elements of an Effective Ethics Training and Education Program for Enlisted Marines	Framework	Desired Outcomes
-Mandatory unit level implementation	-Assign unit ethics Representative(s) -Delegate training requirements to lowest level	-Rules are followed/ character is developed through habituation
-Education that incorporates behavioral ethics	-Augment traditional ethics training and education with behavioral ethics periods of instruction and/or guided discussions	-Marines gain understanding of why people make good and bad ethical decisions
-Training that incorporates ethical decision making with regular reminders of one's moral fiber	-Survey Marines before reminding them of their moral fiber -Remind Marines of their moral fiber -Conduct ethical decision making training -Survey Marines on how they may have conducted themselves without having been reminded of their moral fiber or using behavioral ethics -Debrief and reflect -Archive data in order to quantify training	-Marines experience dissonance and develop ethically sound action scripts

3. Additional Thoughts and Recommendations

Most of the time spent serving in the military for many Marines is in a garrison environment, so a great place to start unit level ethics training according to the framework described above is government ethics. Lieutenant Colonel Joel Leggett's 2021 Marine Corps Gazette article entitled, *Ethics Training: Identifying a gap in professional military education*, raises an important distinction between morality and government ethics for Marine Corps leaders. "Morality deals with deeper, philosophical principles of good and evil, while government ethics are a professional code of conduct, established through regulations and laws, intended to achieve a basic standard of workplace behavior. While there are areas of overlap, the concepts are different. The standard of behavior that government ethics seeks to ensure is the realization and appearance of government integrity, neutrality, fiscal responsibility, and transparency" (Leggett, 2021, p. 1). Lt. Col Leggett points out that not even our officers are being properly trained in government ethics. Two examples of government ethics situations in the fleet in which Marines can go down the wrong path are "soliciting a gift from a prohibited source and using public office for private gain," and fundraising (Leggett, 2021, pp. 1–2). Fundraising for the Marine Corps ball, according to Lt. Col Leggett, "is a virtual minefield of government ethics issues" (Leggett, 2021, p. 1). Simply taking the time to explain to Marines how and why these situations could become opportunities for them to commit unethical behavior would be beneficial. Having experienced leaders explain thought processes of others who failed or made good ethical choices in government ethics situations would provide them with an understanding of what to do themselves. After having discussed these types of events with Marines, units could continue with the framework and conduct ethical decision making training to help them develop sound action scripts.

A necessary pre-cursor for enlisted Marines being able to develop ethically sound actions scripts is that they are able to control their emotions. CAPT Kevin Mullaney (USNA Permanent Military Professor) and Dr. Matt Regan's journal entitled, "Emotion, Ethics, and Military Virtues," makes a compelling argument that "military ethics training that incorporates awareness of the importance of emotion in moral judgment can help

warriors under stress rapidly and non-consciously identify and assess the weight of diverse morally salient considerations. More deliberately designing ethics training that aims to engage emotion should enhance the ability of such training to foster habituation that reinforces military virtues” (Regan & Mullaney, 2020). Explaining to Marines how others were able to handle or not handle their emotions in ethically challenging situations is related to behavioral ethics and getting Marines to understand why people make good and bad ethical decisions. By providing an ethics education that encompasses understanding the emotions of others prior to conducting ethical decision making under duress themselves, Marines will be able to learn from other’s successes and failures. Having a frame of reference going into a stressful and ethically challenging situation should help Marines control their own emotions and make better decisions.

4. Possible Venues To Facilitate Better Training

There must be a clear distinction between ethics education and ethics training throughout the Marine Corps. Ethics education should come first to get Marines to think and learn, and be followed by realistic training that puts their ethical decision making to the test in a controlled environment where it is ok to make mistakes and learn from them. Finding out the hard way forward deployed is not the answer. The Marine Corps has used the Infantry Immersion Trainer (IIT) since 2007 for a number of different training needs, to include challenging ethical decision-making. The IIT uses role players to facilitate realistic conditions, and it has been identified within the Marine Corps that said role players can be substituted using computer generated entities/forces (CGE/F) for certain instances. The end goal is for the IIT to become an immersive training environment by incorporating CGF, live, augmented, and virtual reality. This goes far beyond Marines only receiving annual periods of instruction on the topic via power point slides and/or conducting guided discussions. I believe that the latter are important but should only serve as a pre-cursor to conducting actual training.

Marine Corps Systems Command is currently working on getting the IIT to a state that is capable of providing everything described above. A presentation on the topic titled,

“Marine Corps Systems Command Immersive Training Environment (ITE) Project TALX,” identifies the following problem statement:

Our systems must provide the most realistic training environments in order to ensure that the first time our warfighters face the tactical and ethical dilemmas (shoot/no shoot, escalate force/de-escalate) of the modern operational environment are not on the battlefield. Our systems do not currently provide the comprehensive, multidimensional/multifaceted realism that our warfighters will face in today’s operational environments. (Ingerham & Phillis, 2021)

The Tactical Decision Kit (TDK) is another possible avenue that the Marine Corps could explore further as a means to facilitate ethical decision making in realistic environments that Marines could find themselves operating in in the not so distant future. Captain Paul Zimmerman (USMC), former Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) student and Company Officer at the Naval Academy, provided me with a TDK brief that emphasized the use of interactive tactical decision games and virtual sand table exercises via augmented reality through the Hololens. This is relevant as a potential method for training and educating enlisted Marines (and even Officers) in ethics. For Marines to be able to leverage augmented reality and be faced not only with a difficult and challenging tactical situation, but various ethical dilemmas, would be a major step in the right direction as there are only a very limited number of ways in which enlisted Marines are currently able to train their ethical decision making skills.

V. CONCLUSION

After having analyzed the current ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines, I identified three key missing elements of what I believe would constitute a more effective ethics training and education regimen. The three missing elements identified are mandatory unit level implementation, education that incorporates behavioral ethics, and training that incorporates ethical decision making with regular reminders of one's moral fiber. If the Commandant were to direct the entire force to implement these ideas at the unit level, I believe that the amount of undesirable behavior that occurs each year in the Marine Corps would decrease substantially. An example of how this may be the case can be seen with the decreasing cases of sexual assault since 2018. If the same level of attention and effort was committed towards reducing other areas of undesirable behavior plaguing the Corps, we'd have a much healthier organization overall.

The desired outcomes of implementing the missing essential elements are that rules are followed/character is developed through habituation, Marines gain understanding of why people make good and bad ethical decisions, and that Marines experience dissonance and develop ethically sound action scripts. The first desired outcome is a continuation of everything the Marine Corps has been doing with regard to ethics training and education to date, but is only a foundation that sets the conditions for the other desired outcomes to become a reality. By implementing behavioral ethics and teaching Marines about other people's thought processes and decision making, they will be able to use those examples as a frame of reference for similar situations that they may encounter themselves. The development of behavioral ethics case studies could be the way ahead, and need not only be negative in nature. Having positive examples of good ethical decision making built into training and education would be equally as important as the former. By accomplishing the first two desired outcomes, Marines will be able to work toward developing ethically sound action scripts that may stick with them for life. This can only be achieved by forcing Marines to experience dissonance and requiring them to make difficult ethical decisions during training.

To bridge the gap between the missing elements and desired outcomes of a more effective ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines, it may be necessary to implement the framework identified in this thesis. The most important part of the framework is regularly reminding Marines of their moral fiber. This can be done by having them sign a statement, swear an oath, or simply telling them what is ethically expected of them prior to them engaging in training or activities in which they may make an unethical decision. In order to potentially quantify the training, it would be beneficial to survey Marines before and after to capture results and responses in order to make modifications and improvements.

By re-examining the ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines, the Marine Corps will be that much more prepared to fight and win with honor. At the end of the day, the current ethics training and education regimen for enlisted Marines needs to evolve with the rest of the Marine Corps. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Berger, recently spoke to the Marine Officers at the Naval Academy and he talked about the next conflict potentially being very disaggregated and that Marines may have to operate with what they have in their packs. He mentioned that Marines should not expect to be able to depend on the near immediate logistical support that they have become accustomed to, and that they'd have to support themselves to the best of their ability should they find themselves operating remotely and cut off. This type of operating environment could be rife with opportunities for major misconduct, and "this kind of wrong conduct is very costly-in terms of those wronged, in the erosion of our warrior ethos, and in the damage to our mission objectives" (Couch, 2013, Preface XV). With the next war potentially being right around the corner, Marines must be prepared to conduct themselves as ethical warriors who can maintain a balance between lethality and restraint, and there is no more critical time than now to ensure that they can do just that.

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