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**THESIS**

**DEVELOPING DECISION-MAKING SKILLS IN  
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY MIDSHIPMEN**

by

Daniel P. Healey

June 2004

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**DEVELOPING DECISION-MAKING SKILLS IN  
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY MIDSHIPMEN**

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Major, United States Marine Corps  
B.A., College of the Holy Cross, 1993

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN  
LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study shows the importance of decision-making skills in a military leader. Different models of decision-making are examined and effective ways to teach decision making are presented. If, as the literature shows, decision making is an important skill for an officer, one would assume that the United States Naval Academy (USNA) would have a well-defined, clearly-articulated program that ensures its graduates are, in fact, well-trained in decision making; this study tests that assumption. It presents what the Naval Academy's senior leadership's goals and priorities are for developing midshipmen as decision makers. The study also determines the value placed on decision-making abilities by those primarily responsible for midshipmen's professional development, and how well they believe the Naval Academy prepares midshipmen for the decision-making responsibilities they will face as officers. Opportunities for midshipmen to make decisions are identified, and midshipmen were asked how well they think the Naval Academy prepares them to be decision makers. The findings of this study assess the extent to which the Naval Academy presently develops decision-making skills in its midshipmen.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This much is certain: The future must not simply unfold. Rather, it will need to be shaped by your leadership. The decisions you make...will determine America's future .

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld  
U.S. Naval Academy Commencement Address  
May 23, 2003

### A. BACKGROUND

Secretary Rumsfeld told the Class of 2003 what the nation requires of U.S. Naval Academy graduates: strong leadership and sound decision making. These two traits are inseparable for military officers. Decision making has been called "the essence of leadership" (Beach & Scott, 1989, p. 55). First and foremost, "a battlefield commander is a decision maker" (Athens, 1992, p. 1). To command is "to think and decide" (Nye, 1986, p. 19). Decision making is "the essence of command in battle" (Schmitt, 1988, p. 18). The linkage between leadership--specifically *military* leadership--and decision making is clear and indisputable.

The Naval Academy's mission is:

To develop midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty in order to provide graduates who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004).

Every facet of the midshipmen's experience at the Naval Academy is designed to prepare them for the challenges they will face as commissioned officers. Because the literature makes plain that military officers must be effective decision makers to be effective leaders, it would be reasonable to assume that the Naval Academy would have a well-defined, clearly-articulated program designed to produce capable decision makers. This study tests that assumption.

## **B. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to assess what the Naval Academy does to develop decision-making skills in its midshipmen. It identifies to what extent the Naval Academy has stated the development of decision-making skills in midshipmen as a goal and has articulated that goal to those responsible for midshipmen's professional development. In addition, it explores to what extent midshipmen believe they are being developed as decision makers.

## **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

The primary research question this study answers is: *What does the U.S. Naval Academy do to develop decision-making skills in its midshipmen?* A number of secondary questions are answered as well: (1) *Why are decision-making skills important for military leaders?* (2) *What are the different decision-making models?* (3) *How can decision-making skills be taught or developed?* (4) *Has the Naval Academy stated anywhere that it places substantial emphasis on the importance of developing decision-making skills in its midshipmen, and if so, where?* (5) *To what extent do those responsible for the midshipmen's professional development perceive this importance?* (6) *What opportunities do midshipmen have to develop decision-making skills?* (7) *To what extent do midshipmen believe the Naval Academy is developing them as decision makers, and how is this done?*

The methodology used in this thesis research consists of the following steps:

1. Conduct a literature review of journal articles, professional publications, and other information resources.
2. Examine Naval Academy missions and documents to learn what the institution's goals are in terms of producing officers who will be effective decision makers.
3. Interview senior leadership responsible for achieving any Naval Academy goals related to decision making.
4. Collect qualitative and quantitative data from company officers via a survey designed by the author.
5. Collect qualitative and quantitative data from representative samples of midshipmen via focus groups conducted by the author.
6. Analyze data from the company officer survey and midshipmen focus groups.

#### **D. BENEFITS OF THE STUDY**

Through the literature review, this study provides a concise compilation of decision-making research relevant to preparing midshipmen for commissioned service in the Navy and Marine Corps, to include what the midshipmen need to know about decision making and methods to teach them. The assessment of what the Naval Academy does to develop midshipmen's decision-making skills determines whether or not any explicit goals in this area exist. Further, the study identifies how well these goals are understood by those primarily responsible for achieving them, namely the company officers. Lastly, the data collected from the midshipmen gives the Naval Academy feedback on how well it is achieving these goals.

#### **E. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY**

This thesis begins with an introduction to the research topic. Chapter II then presents decision-making literature that is relevant to the Naval Academy's efforts to prepare midshipmen for commissioned service in the Navy and Marine Corps. Chapter III explains how the data were collected in sufficient detail that would allow the study to be replicated. Chapter IV is an analysis of the data collected for this study. Chapter V presents conclusions, recommendations, and questions for further research.

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## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Decisionmaking is essential to the conduct of war since all actions are the results of decisions or of nondecisions [Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1: Warfighting, 1997, p. 85].

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Decision making is a fundamental aspect of leadership, be it on the bridge of a Navy ship or in a Wall Street boardroom. Vast amounts of research have been dedicated to develop ways to improve people's decision-making abilities, resulting in an abundance of literature. This chapter will define decision making as it pertains to this study and organize the literature in a manner that is relevant and useful to the leadership of the Naval Academy.

After acknowledging the limitations of this literature review and then establishing an operational definition of decision making, the literature will be used to demonstrate the importance of good decision-making skills for military leaders. Next, decision-making processes generally fall into one of two models, and these models will be examined. Finally, this chapter will present ways that decision-making skills can be taught.

### **B. LIMITATIONS**

Extant literature on decision making is enormous. A comprehensive review of such a body would be unwieldy and lack the focus both appropriate and necessary for this study. As a result, the author reviewed literature deemed relevant to the aspect of decision making addressed in this research, that is, decision making as it pertains to preparing Naval Academy midshipmen for service as commissioned officers in the Navy and Marine Corps. While this review is not intended to be exhaustive in terms of the expansive body of decision-making literature, it is thorough in covering the aspect addressed herein.

### **C. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF DECISION MAKING**

People routinely face a wide range of decisions. Decisions can vary from trivial to momentous, simple to complex, routine to extraordinary. The consequences of a decision can be insignificant or lasting and far-reaching. Some decisions are strictly

personal while others are job-related. Some are made by individuals, and others are made by groups.

According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, to "decide" is to arrive at a solution that ends uncertainty or dispute; it implies previous consideration of a matter causing doubt, wavering, debate, or controversy. A "decision" is a determination arrived at after consideration (Webster, 1990). Decision making is the process one uses to reach a decision. That process will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

When speaking of decision making by military officers, there is an ethical aspect that cannot be discounted. These leaders are entrusted with the responsible, controlled employment of violence. Young service members' lives are placed in their care. Noncombatants can find themselves inadvertently and helplessly caught in the path of hostilities. It is not enough for officers to be able to make legal decisions--they must be prepared to make moral decisions as well.

This study is concerned with "leadership decisions," that is, decisions in which the decision maker must take into account more than just himself or herself. Leadership decisions go beyond "job-related" decisions in that military officers are expected to demonstrate leadership in every aspect of their lives. In the sense that an officer's duty is far-reaching, one could say that leadership decisions are any decisions related to an officer's duty. For the midshipmen of the Brigade at the Naval Academy, their duty is much-encompassing as well. They are expected to demonstrate leadership in the decisions they make in Bancroft Hall, on the athletic playing fields, in extra-curricular activities, as well as on liberty and leave. The leadership decisions that confront midshipmen at the Naval Academy should prepare them for the decisions they will face as officers; these decisions will be the focus of this study.

#### **D. IMPORTANCE OF DECISION-MAKING SKILLS IN LEADERS**

When all is said and done the greatest quality in a commander is 'decision'...Indecision and hesitation are fatal in (an) officer... (Heinl, 1966, p. 80)

Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery

The conditions under which military leaders must make decisions are unlike those faced by any other profession. One needs to have at least some understanding of the nature of the modern battlefield to appreciate the environment in which a military decision maker operates. In addition to the conditions, it is useful, as well, to have an insight into the demands that modern warfare places on the military decision maker.

### **1. The Modern Battlefield**

Many elements of war are timeless. The great Prussian military philosopher Carl von Clausewitz observed nearly two centuries ago that, "war is the realm of uncertainty" (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 101). Despite astonishing advances in technology, uncertainty continues to pervade today's battlefield (MCDP 6: Command & Control, 1997).

Although uncertainty is inescapable on the modern battlefield, it is far from being the only challenge a military decision maker faces. Disorder and confusion are compounded by high-tempo operations and rapid change (MCDP 1-3: Tactics, 1997). War is fraught with danger and stress as each side attempts to violently impose its will on the other. Even the simplest of things become difficult--a phenomenon described as "friction" (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 119). The battlefield is fluid and dynamic. Fleeting opportunities demand that leaders accept risk and act on incomplete or ambiguous information. To succeed, military leaders must do more than accept or merely endure these conditions--they must embrace them.

### **2. The Demands of Maneuver Warfare**

Until late in the last century, victory in war was usually achieved by a combination of devastating firepower and numerical superiority. This type of war was known as Attrition Warfare. The most notable historical exception to this was demonstrated at times by the Germans in World Wars I & II. In the late 1980s, U.S. Armed Forces--led by the U.S. Marine Corps--developed what came to be known as Maneuver Warfare. While not discarding the need for decisive firepower and overwhelming violence, Maneuver Warfare seeks to destroy the enemy's will to resist. The effectiveness of Maneuver Warfare was witnessed by the entire world during Operation Desert Storm in 1991 and again in Operation Iraqi Freedom 12 years later. This dramatic shift in doctrine required a shift in thinking by military officers.

### ***a) War is Time-Competitive***

As previously discussed, war is a competitive struggle where situations change rapidly and unexpectedly. Whoever can make and implement decisions consistently faster gains a tremendous, often decisive advantage (MCDP 1, 1997). One model of the decision cycle that is closely associated with Maneuver Warfare is the "Boyd Cycle." The Boyd Cycle, named after its creator, retired U.S. Air Force Colonel John Boyd, addresses the time-competitive process of decision making in combat. This continually recurring cycle consists of four steps: Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act (from this, the Boyd Cycle is also commonly known as the OODA Loop). Central to this theory is timeliness of decisions (MCDP 1, 1997). As one is able to cycle through the OODA Loop consistently faster than one's enemy, the enemy falls further and further behind. Everything he does is too late, making his actions ineffective and irrelevant, and contributing to a state of panic (MCDP 1-3, 1997).

The rapid decision cycle described here cannot be achieved if leaders must send information to their higher headquarters and await a decision. Rather, the most effective way to generate speed is through decentralized execution (MCDP 1-3, 1997). For decision-making authority to be pushed down, however, a unit must have leaders in place at every level who are capable of making sound decisions in a timely manner.

In addition to being *capable* of making decisions, military leaders must recognize their *obligation* to make decisions. In fact, when faced by a situation to make a decision, a military leader has a solemn duty to make a decision (MCDP 1-3, 1997). Remember that all actions in war are the result of decisions or nondecisions (MCDP 1, 1997). To fail to make a decision surrenders the initiative to the enemy. From this, it can be deduced that *failure to make a decision is a failure to lead*.

This is not to imply that making a decision on the modern battlefield is in any way easy, as demonstrated by the conditions depicted in the previous section. Although uncertainty can be reduced, it can never be eliminated. In the face of uncertainty, the natural inclination is to postpone a decision until more information can be gathered (MCDP 1, 1997). To continue to wait for information that may or may not

ever arrive is not acceptable on a time-competitive battlefield. A leader must accept a certain degree of uncertainty (Schmitt, 1988), decide, and act.

***b) No Perfect Answers***

If there were perfect solutions to be found on the battlefield, then it would appear that the military decision maker is placed in an impossible situation. The reality, however, is that there are no perfect solutions on the battlefield, and therefore leaders must not agonize over finding one. The challenge for the military decision maker, then, is to select a promising course of action with an acceptable degree of risk, and do so more quickly than the enemy (MCDP 1, 1997).

Rather than optimal solutions, the fast tempo of the modern battlefield requires rapid, "close enough," acceptable decisions (Student text 101-5, 1996). In other words, as General George S. Patton once said, "A good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan next week" (MCDP 6, 1997, p. 116). This "close enough" solution is what is known in the literature as "satisficing" (Athens, 1992, p. 12). Satisficing in combat does not come without risk, however, and should not be undertaken lightly. Improperly applied by inexperienced personnel, satisficing in combat could have catastrophic results.

***c) Coup D'Oeil***

How, then, does a military decision maker know when a solution is good enough? The answer lies in a French term, *coup d'oeil*, coined by Clausewitz (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 102). The literal translation is "stroke of the eye;" more commonly it is called "tactical sense" (MCDP 1-3, 1997, p. 27). It is an intuitive ability to quickly recognize the essential elements of a situation and make an effective, timely decision (Athens, 1992). The Germans call it *fingerspitzengefühl*, which describes a combat leader's "fingertip feel" for the battlefield (Tritten, 1996, p. 30).

*Coup d'oeil* is gained through experience. A military leader's expertise is organized in his or her mind and readily accessible for recall (Allen, 1993). Clausewitz described it as an indispensable quality on the battlefield (Clausewitz, 1984). It is what enables a leader to operate effectively in an environment of ambiguity and uncertainty (Athens, 1992).

#### ***d) Moral Courage***

A military leader must have one last trait to be able to be an effective decision maker: moral courage. Moral courage here is the ability to make and carry out decisions regardless of the cost (MCDP 1-3, 1997). Leaders must have the moral courage to make tough decisions in the face of uncertainty and accept full responsibility for their decisions (Schmitt, 1988). Failure to make a decision and act because of a lack of moral courage is a serious breach of a leader's obligations. Many decisions faced by military leaders, both in and out of combat, can be difficult, and without moral courage, those leaders are ill-equipped to carry out their duties.

### **E. DECISION-MAKING MODELS**

There are several variations to existing decision-making models. Generally, though, these variations can be classified into two categories, the analytical decision-making model and intuitive decision-making model. These two models are fundamentally different in theory and application.

#### **1. Analytical Decision-Making Model**

This is the classical, traditional view of the process of making decisions (Klein, 2003). Basically, a problem is thoroughly analyzed, different options are evaluated and compared, and the option deemed best is selected. The analytical decision-making model has been the standard against which all other methods have been compared. Criticism of alternative decision-making processes has been rooted in how close they come to finding the perfect solution that the analytical decision-making model is designed to uncover.

##### ***a) Optimization***

The goal behind analytical decision making is to find the *optimal* solution. It is a process-based model (Schmitt, 1995) that relies on several assumptions. The first assumption is there is a "best answer" to a particular problem. A second assumption is that the information needed to decide which solution is best actually exists and can be found. A third assumption is that one has the time and resources necessary to gather and evaluate this information.

##### ***b) Methodical***

Analytical decision making requires reason, but not necessarily experience. As long as one follows the steps properly, one will reach a good, maybe

even perfect, solution. For military leaders and planners, this has great appeal. In a profession in which actual decision-making experiences in combat can be rare--particularly for junior officers--the analytical decision-making model offers hope: to make good decisions, one simply has to learn the process and systematically follow it. As long as one has the required reasoning skills to choose the best option, a novice can reach the same answer as a seasoned military genius (Schmitt, 1995).

Along the "is it art or is it science?" continuum, analytical decision making is highly scientific. It is methodical and time consuming and leaves nothing to chance (Klein, 2003). The decision maker exhaustively gathers information to better analyze, evaluate, and compare different options. This concurrent comparison of multiple options is known in the literature as multiattribute utility analysis (MAUA) and is the core of analytical decision making (Klein, 1989; Schmitt, 1996).

### ***c) Poor Fit for Military Decision Making***

The appeal of the analytical decision-making model is that it depicts decision making as a neat, orderly process that--properly executed--promises optimization (Schmitt, 1995). As demonstrated earlier in the depiction of the environment on the modern battlefield in which military decision makers operate, however, this is not the case. Instead, combat decision making takes place amid confusion and ambiguity where time is scarce and information frequently is unavailable. Often, what the enemy *does* present is deceptive and misleading. Furthermore, optimal solutions--the objective of analytical decision making--seldom, if ever, exist on the battlefield.

Klein (1989) has done extensive research on the decision-making processes people use in these and similar environments. What he has found is that the concurrent option comparison that serves as the core of analytical decision making rarely occurs. In fact, two decades of research have shown that more than 90% of critical decisions made are based on intuition (Klein, 2003, p. 18), which is examined in the second model.

## **2. Intuitive Decision-Making Model**

It has been established that analytical decision making is not well suited for the conditions under which military leaders often have to make decisions. But this classical

decision-making model of concurrent option comparison was not seriously questioned until the 1970s, when cognitive psychologists began to study how experienced decision makers made "real-life" decisions. Their research led to a very different decision-making model than the one that had been taught for years.

***a) What's in a Name?***

The term "naturalistic decision making" was created because researchers sought to study decision making under naturalistic rather than controlled conditions (Schmitt, 1995). Klein would later coin the phrase "recognition-primed decision making" (Klein, 1989, p. 59), a process that will be explained in greater detail later in this section. Like naturalistic decision making, recognition-primed decision making is characterized by uncertain, dynamic environments; lack of information; unclear or competing goals; stress; friction; and time constraints (Schmitt, 1995). Although the name for intuitive decision making has evolved over the years, they all describe a decision-making process that is fundamentally different than the traditional model.

***b) Satisficing***

A principal difference between intuitive and analytical decision making is the type of solution sought. Analytical decision making searches for the *optimal* solution. Intuitive decision making, however, seeks a *satisfactory* solution. Central to intuitive decision making is Simon's principal of "satisficing" (Athens, 1992). Satisficing is commonly done either when an optimal solution is not needed (i.e. a "good enough" solution will suffice) or when it is believed that there is no absolutely right answer to be found (Schmitt, 1995). Both of these cases describe the decisions with which military leaders are often confronted, particularly in combat.

***c) The Role of Experience***

Whereas experience is of minimal importance in analytical decision making, it is essential for intuitive decision making. The basis for intuitive decision making is the decision maker's assessment of the situation (Schmitt, 1995). Absent experience, he or she will be unable to make any sense of the situation intuitively, and would likely have to resort to a more analytical approach. Research has shown that the more experience one has, the more one relies on one's intuition in making decisions (Klein, 2003); the converse is true, as well.

Proficient decision makers are able to use their experience to recognize situations as familiar (Klein, 1989). Amid apparent chaos and disorder, he or she is able to identify patterns and determine which cues are important. This is where intuition--which is based on one's abilities to distinguish patterns and interpret cues--aids the decision-making process; people develop intuition as they gain experience in their field (Klein, 2003).

Intuition is not magic. To better understand how it enables one to recognize patterns and interpret cues, it is important to understand how the mind organizes and stores information. A pattern is merely a set of cues "chunked" together (Klein, 2003). Miller's concept of "chunking," as cited by Athens (1992), refers to the mind's ability to group information in such a way that makes it easier to store and retrieve.

Short-term memory is able to hold only about seven chunks of information. Chunking information into larger and larger units is one of the most important processes of short-term memory (Athens, 1992). For information to reach long-term memory, it must be related to other information already in long-term storage and be given meaning (Beach & Scott, 1989). The key to intuitive decision making is one's ability to retrieve this information that has been chunked and stored from one's experiences.

What experts know is better organized and more readily accessible than what novices know (Nickerson, Perkins, & Smith, 1985). This is particularly relevant in intuitive decision making, where the effective decision maker is able to rapidly retrieve stored information and apply it to a problem (Athens, 1992). This helps explain the critical role experience plays in intuitive decision making. Intuitive decision making is the realm of the expert, not the novice.

#### ***d) The Model***

Klein has led the way in research of intuitive decision making. He has spent years mapping and refining the model of how people use their experience and intuition to make decisions. His most recent publication, *Intuition at Work* (2003), emphasizes that intuitive decision making is not random or "shooting from the hip."

Rather, his research has shown that there is a method, or process, to intuitive decision making. Klein's model is called the Recognition-Primed Decision (RPD) model (see Figure 1).

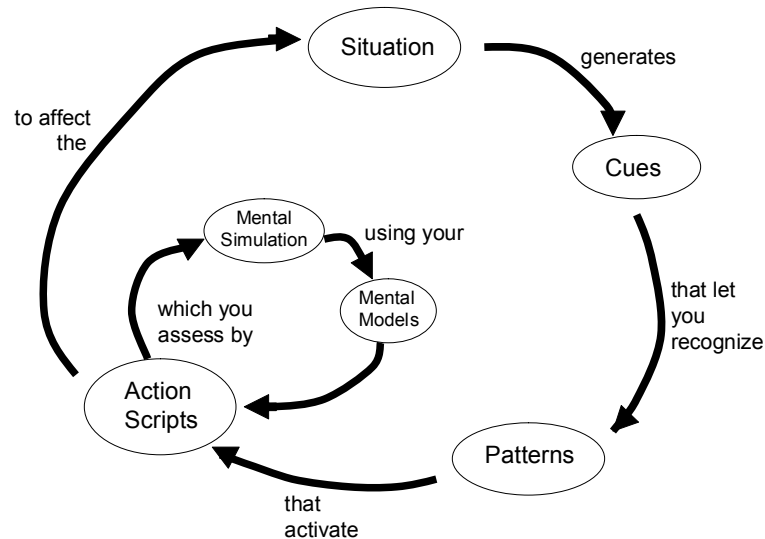


Figure 1. Recognition-Primed Decision (RPD) Model.

#### i. Does Not Consider Multiple Options

Intuitive decision making does not involve the consideration of multiple options. This is a fundamental departure from analytical decision making, which centers on concurrent option comparison. Research has shown that experienced decision makers are able to generate a workable option (i.e. one that meets the requirements of satisficing) first (Klein, 1989). This eliminates the need to weigh advantages and disadvantages of multiple options (Klein, 1989; Schmitt, 1995). It is immediately evident that this would make the decision-making process faster, which creates opportunities and cumulative advantage on the battlefield.

#### ii. Situation Assessment

Instead of systematic comparison of multiple options, intuitive decision making focuses on assessment of the situation (Schmitt, 1995; MCDP 6, 1997). The experienced decision maker scans the environment and determines which cues are

relevant to the decision at hand (Athens, 1992). He or she is able to access and retrieve pertinent information from memory to begin to make sense of the situation.

### iii. Pattern Recognition

Expert decision makers use their experience to recognize key aspects of situations, enabling them to make a decision rapidly (Klein, 1989). Mandelbrot used the term "fractals" to describe ordered elements that emerge from seeming chaos. Within these "Mandelbrot Sets," repetitious patterns appear; while not identical to one another, there are enough similarities to identify patterns (Row, 1999).

### iv. Mental Simulation

Because intuitive decision-making does not compare multiple options, it is important to evaluate the solution generated. Although pattern recognition primes the decision-making process, the generated solution needs to be tested. The patterns include routines for responding that are known as "action scripts." These action scripts are appraised by mental simulation. Through experience, people build mental models, which aid in mental simulation; good mental models of how things work are necessary for effective mental simulation (Klein, 2003).

Mental simulation is the way people evaluate their decisions and figure out what to expect before taking action so they can determine whether or not the decision will have the desired effect. If the decision maker is satisfied, he or she responds. If a problem is spotted, the action script is altered. If no way around the problem can be found, the option is discarded and the next option is evaluated, without comparing the two options (Klein, 2003).

### v. Summary of RPD Model

Intuition is not a mysterious quality. Rather, it is a developed skill, firmly grounded in experience, and it can be further developed through education and practice (MCDP 1-3, 1997). Intuitive decision making is much faster than analytical decision making and copes with uncertainty, ambiguity, and dynamic situations more effectively (Schmitt, 1995). For this reason, although most professional military education (PME) schools teach the methodical, time-consuming analytical model of concurrent option comparison, most military leaders actually use intuitive decision

making. In fact, research has shown that 95% of decisions by naval commanders are based on intuition (Klein, 2003, p. 18).

### **3. Which is Better?**

The literature does not suggest that one model--analytical or intuitive decision making--is inherently better than the other (Infantry Officer Course, 1999). Different conditions call for different strategies (Klein, 1989), and the decision-making approach should be based on the situation (MCDP 6, 1997). What is important for military leaders is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each model and use their judgment to decide which model is most appropriate for a given situation.

#### ***a) Strengths and Weaknesses***

The following draws out and summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of each model.

##### **i. Analytical Decision Making**

There are many occasions when analytical decision making is the appropriate model to use. Two of the most important factors to take into account are the amount of time available and the decision maker's experience level. When time allows a military leader to apply analytical decision making (usually pre-hostilities), he or she should make the most of it (MCDP 1-3, 1997). The analytical approach should also be used when novices lack the experience base to make proper intuitive decisions, or when a seasoned decision maker encounters novel conditions (MCDP 6, 1997; Klein, 2003).

In addition to time available and experience level, there are several other factors that might lead one to use the analytical approach: the situation is static; the decision needs to be justified; internal disagreement (in the case of group decision making) needs to be resolved; an optimal solution is desired or necessary; a choice must be made from among several clearly defined options; or, a problem is particularly complex (Schmitt, 1995; Klein, 2003).

##### **ii. Intuitive Decision Making**

The intuitive approach is more appropriate for the vast majority of decisions faced by military leaders. These decisions are made in fluid, rapidly changing conditions when time and uncertainty are critical factors (MCDP 6, 1997). As stated in

the U.S. Army's 1954 edition of *FM 100-5: Operations*, signed by General Matthew B. Ridgway, "timeliness of decision is the essence of command in action" (Schmitt, 1988, p. 19).

Intuitive decision making is not always superior to analytical, however. Since it relies extensively on experience, intuitive decision making is not reliable for inexperienced decision makers. Incorrect associations or pattern recognition could lead to inappropriate or even dangerous responses (Row, 1999). Leaders lacking the necessary experience can severely limit the applicability of intuitive decision making, despite its great appeal. Having leaders in place with adequate experience to make intuitive decisions can be problematic for the Armed Forces (Athens, 1992).

***b) Where To From Here?***

Neither analysis nor intuition is sufficient alone (Klein, 2003). While conceptually opposite, the two models are not exclusive in practice (Schmitt, 1995). Intuition helps one decide how to react to a situation, while analysis verifies one's intuitions to ensure they are not misleading (Klein, 2003). The most effective decision maker is the one who can make good judgments by oscillating along a continuum between intuition and analysis (Paparone, 2001).

The modern battlefield demands initiative and sound decision making at all levels. Military leaders must make decisions of great consequence in the face of uncertainty, disorder, and stress. Combat is time-competitive, and the side that consistently makes decisions faster gains a tremendous advantage. Leaders must be prepared to excel under these conditions. From the beginning, their training and education should foster initiative and improve decision making (MCDP 6, 1997).

**F. METHODS OF TEACHING DECISION-MAKING SKILLS**

It is clear that decision making is an important skill for military leaders. Unless it is a skill that can be taught, however, then it would be a moot point with regard to the professional development of midshipmen at the Naval Academy. Fortunately, research has shown many ways to accelerate and enhance the acquisition of decision-making skills.

## **1. Create the Conditions**

The bold initiative required of all leaders on the modern battlefield is not born of itself. Rather, a spirit of initiative is fostered in environments in which a conscious effort is made create the conditions that will allow initiative to flourish. Such conditions must be endorsed by the most senior leadership and nurtured at every level in a command. To gain the desired result, initiative must not merely be allowed, it must be demanded. An institution must develop a predilection for tolerating mistakes of action but not those of inaction. Only then will leaders at all levels express an eagerness to seek and accept responsibility (MCDP 6, 1997).

### ***a) Establish Parameters, Tolerate Mistakes***

The very first class that second lieutenants at the U.S. Marine Corps's Infantry Officer Course (IOC) receive is simply titled, "The Decision." Newly designated infantry lieutenants are informed that their 10 weeks at IOC is a time to practice decision making, to be bold and make mistakes in the name of decisive action (IOC, 1999). A critical element present here is an institutional commitment to tolerate mistakes of action, to encourage those who are willing to strive and occasionally fail rather than be content to sit back and allow others to make the difficult decisions. Mistakes of action are tolerated, whereas inaction and indecision are anathema for Marine officers.

To be able to tolerate mistakes, an institution must first establish the parameters for what type of mistakes reasonably can be allowed. Recklessness or an absence of good judgment is not acceptable simply because one desires to create the conditions for fostering initiative. To do so would quickly result in imposition of a more restrictive environment and achieve a result opposite of that desired.

Before establishing the parameters for what type of mistakes can be made in the name of creating decision-making opportunities, one must first identify and understand the decision requirements of a particular role or job. This is the first step in Klein's Intuitive Skills Training Program (ISTP), to determine which judgments and decisions repeatedly arise in a particular profession or position (Klein, 2003). Once an institution identifies what types of decisions are required to be made by its members, it can then begin to determine what type of mistakes are acceptable. This step requires

prudence and good judgment, but it also demands a willingness on the part of leaders at every level to accept a degree of risk for the benefit of developing leaders with initiative.

***b) Make Expectations Known***

Having made a commitment to foster initiative and identify areas in which mistakes can be tolerated, an institution must then make known its expectations in regard to decision making. In the case of military leaders, it must be made clear that indecision is not an option (Allen, 1993). For example, prior to World War II at the German *Kriegsakademie* (which produced the forefathers of Maneuver Warfare), two of most important characteristics of a leader were said to be initiative and a willingness to accept responsibility; evasion or shifting of responsibility was to be avoided at all times (Wedemeyer, 1938).

***c) Micromanagement Stifles Initiative***

In the U.S. Armed Forces, the term "zero-defects mentality" is used to describe the belief that the leadership is unwilling to tolerate mistakes, regardless of their cause or circumstances. The extent to which it exists at various levels of leadership is a matter of great debate, and certainly it would be inaccurate to suggest that a universal degree of zero-defects mentality pervades all levels across the Services. The important point here is the detrimental effect such a mentality can have on initiative and decision making.

An unwillingness to allow any mistakes whatsoever often leads to micromanagement. This micromanagement is the manifestation of a lack of trust and not only curtails expectations of initiative, but actually makes taking initiative too risky for potential decision makers. In the Armed Forces, this results in seniors who are too ready and willing to perform their subordinates' duties and over-supervise instead of letting them learn and grow. Oftentimes, it also results in training schedules that account for every minute of a service member's time, thereby eliminating any opportunity for initiative (Glasgow, 1998).

Service members trained in such environments lack the necessary skills and traits to implement the warfighting doctrine of Maneuver Warfare. Trust and a willingness to tolerate mistakes are a must in creating leaders who will be both prepared and willing to demonstrate initiative and make decisions on the battlefield. To better

prepare these leaders, they must be given responsibility and expected to act at every opportunity.

## **2. Increase the Experience Base**

As a rule, experienced decision makers are better decision makers. This is particularly true for intuitive decision making, which has been shown to be the model most frequently used by military leaders. Situation assessment and pattern recognition are central to intuitive decision making and require a broad base of experience (Schmitt, 1995). Therefore, it makes sense that the way to improve intuitive skills is to strengthen one's experience base (Klein, 2003).

This requirement for experience creates something of a predicament for those responsible for training and developing military decision makers. It is one thing to acknowledge the value of experience, yet quite another to identify ways to accelerate the process of gaining experience, and therein lies the challenge. And yet, the process must be accelerated. In fact, the Marine Corps places so much importance on developing decision-making skills in its leaders that its doctrinal publication on warfighting states, "We should spare no effort to accelerate our decisionmaking ability" (MCDP 1, 1997, p. 85). The question then, is one of how leaders should be trained (Klein, 1996). How can leaders develop the experience base needed to be effective decision makers?

### ***a) The Value of Practice***

Vegetius, a 4th Century Roman military advisor, said, "What is necessary to be performed in the heat of action should constantly be practiced in the leisure of peace" (Brewster, 2002, p. 3). This has long been a maxim for military training, from seemingly simple tasks (e.g. reloading a rifle) to those that are much more complex (e.g. underway replenishment of a surface warship). This same truism, however, is equally applicable to--and necessary for--decision making.

Klein says that the "secret" for improving intuition is "practice, practice, practice" (2003, p. 26). Research has consistently shown that decision making is a skill that improves with practice (Beach & Scott, 1989). Experience and judgment are critical to effective decision making, and the only way to acquire these is through repeated practice (Schmitt, 1995). Increased intuition, in particular, directly correlates to the amount and frequency of practice (Tritten, 1996). Klein actually refers to intuitive skills

as being strengths that can be expanded through exercise; in other words, the more exercise, the stronger they get (2003). Practice making decisions increases the number of patterns available for the brain to be able to analyze during times of crisis (Basic Officer Course, 2002).

#### ***b) Real-Life Experience***

While combat provides the most instructive lessons on decisionmaking, tactical leaders cannot wait for war to begin their education. We must be competent in our profession before our skills are called upon. The lives of (those we lead) depend on it (MCDP 1-3, 1997, pp. 114-5).

The most meaningful type of decision-making experience is real-life experience, but there are problems with that. For one, many do not get the opportunities to accumulate enough real-life experience to develop expertise. Also, as reflected by the previous quote, many cannot afford to wait until they are doing something for real to learn from their mistakes (Klein, 2003). For military leaders, the cost of mistakes in combat is measured in the loss of life by those for whom they are responsible.

#### ***c) Alternatives to Real-Life Experience***

Former Chief of Naval Operations and U.S. Navy legend, Admiral Arleigh A. "31 Knot" Burke, once said, "Nobody can actually duplicate the strain that a commander is under in making a decision in combat" (USNA, 2003, p. 155). The accuracy of Admiral Burke's statement points to a dilemma faced by those responsible for the training and education of military leaders (MCDP 1-3, 1997; Klein, 2003). Fortunately, much can be done in training and education to develop decision-making skills, augment real-life experiences, and accelerate learning.

##### ***i. Study Military History***

Short of actual combat experiences, the study of military history can make a vital contribution to the development of judgment and insight (MCDP 1-3, 1997). Clausewitz's *coup d'oeil*, the intuitive ability to quickly and accurately assess a situation, comes from expert knowledge of war. This expert knowledge comes in part from the study of military history, and enables one to recognize patterns, an essential skill for intuitive decision making (Allen, 1993).

The appeal here is that professional reading is one of the most effective ways to nourish competence early in one's military career (Nye, 1986). As a result, the more one studies military history, the better prepared one will be to lead in combat (Glasgow, 1998). Another significant appeal is that study of military history requires relatively little by way of resources and supporting infrastructure.

#### ii. Tactical Exercises

In many ways, developing decision-making skills is a form of mental conditioning. As with learning in general, mental conditioning works best when it is experiential, that is, learning by doing (Klein, 2003). In this regard, participating in tactical exercises can contribute to one's experience base in a very rich way. The obvious drawback is that--unlike studying military history and some of the other methods presented here--planning and conducting tactical exercises require a significant amount of time and resources, to include equipment and training facilities.

#### iii. War Games

The term "war games" is sometimes used to describe what was just presented as "tactical exercises," which entail personnel using weapons and equipment while conducting actual maneuvers on terrain. For the purposes of this study--and consistent with the literature--the term "war games" refers to tactical decision games (commonly known as TDGs), map exercises, "sand-table" exercises, and even computer simulations. They are another effective means of compiling the experience base needed to be a capable decision maker. In all of these decision-making exercises, a tactical situation is briefed either orally or in writing, and that situation is visually depicted on a map, sand table, drawing, or some other similar means.

In terms of time and resources required, war games produce a tremendous return. They are able to capture much of the essence of tough decisions without many of the costs or other overhead of more complicated simulations or exercises, and can be done in a shorter time, allowing greater frequency and repetition (Klein, 2003). Because of this, war games have become particularly popular in the U.S. Marine Corps and Army.

War games prepare military leaders to make difficult, real-life decisions. They have proven to be an effective mechanism for developing individuals' abilities to make decisions under stress. They enable leaders to make better decisions more rapidly, which is critical in the time-competitive arena of combat (Brewster, 2002).

While war games can be conducted alone, they are more effective in small groups, ideally 6-8 people (Klein, 2003, p. 43). One benefit of doing war games in groups is the insight and feedback a seasoned facilitator can provide. Another is that participants learn from one another's decision-making processes and innovative ideas. Critical analysis of decisions sharpens participants' decision-making skills. Having to perform in the presence of others not only adds to the pressure, but is realistic as well.

Several common characteristics of war games make them most effective. They should be kept simple and easy to run. Total time generally should not exceed 30-50 minutes (Klein, 2003, p. 44). Routine situations should be avoided; the less familiar the environment, the more creativity the participant must display (MCDP 1-3, 1997). Notional resources available to the decision maker (e.g. personnel and equipment) should be limited. Information should be incomplete or uncertain. Participants should be forced to make and communicate their decision within a stringent, challenging time limit (MCDP 6, 1997). Generally it is better to call on people than to ask for volunteers (Klein, 2003). There should be no "textbook" solution (Brewster, 2002; Klein, 2003; MCDP 1-3, 1997). Solicit multiple solutions, but do not exhaust a situation completely; time available usually prohibits this, plus to do so would inhibit continued debate and discussion among the participants after the conclusion of the war game (Klein, 2003).

#### iv. Duplicate the Conditions

An important goal in designing tactical exercises and war games is to create decision-making conditions that are as realistic as possible. This is the second step in Klein's Intuitive Skills Training Program (the first step is to identify and understand decision requirements)(2003). For people to be able to perform in a stressful environment, it is crucial to provide practice under conditions similar to those likely to be encountered in a combat setting. Training that simulates novel or high-stress conditions has been successful in a variety of military applications, to include decision making.

Therefore, "realistic" training is a critical instructional strategy to prepare personnel to operate in stressful environments (Driskell, 1993). Admittedly, tactical exercises are better at duplicating desired physical conditions, but war games very effectively replicate many of the non-physical conditions faced by military decision makers.

Research has shown that a phased approach to stress training is effective. This approach allows the trainee to learn or master a desired task in a normal (i.e. non-stress) setting, and then phase-in stressors as training progresses. This ensures that external stressors do not interfere with initial skill acquisition, but ensures that ultimately the trainee practices his or her skills in a realistic combat stress setting (Driskell, 1993). With specific regard to decision-making training, this phased approach would call for some introduction to how decisions are made (i.e. the different models) and practice making decisions with limited stressors before throwing all the previously-mentioned stressors that characterize war games at a novice decision maker. This would ensure comprehension of the process and some opportunity to develop some confidence rather than be overwhelmed immediately.

Giving military leaders the opportunity to practice making tough decisions under challenging, realistic conditions is beneficial in several ways. It helps prepare them to function effectively in varying environments, amid uncertainty and disorder, and with limited time (MCDP 6, 1997). They learn to take decisive action in uncertain environments. They come to understand and accept the fact that feeling "uncertain" will be their normal mental state on the battlefield, not the exceptional one (IOC, 1999). Lastly, it teaches these decision makers that they can--and must--trust their intuition in stressful situations, as they will be required to do in real-life and combat situations (Tritten, 1996).

### **3. The Importance of Feedback**

The previous section examined the importance of experience for effective decision making. Merely having experience is not enough, however; experience must be turned into expertise (Klein, 2003, p. 52). This is done by getting feedback on decisions, the third step in Klein's Intuitive Skills Training Program (first step is to identify and understand decision requirements, second step is to create realistic decision-making conditions)(2003). No decision-making exercise should end without a discussion/critique

at the end to draw out the key lessons to be learned (Schmitt, 1995). What the critique focuses on will significantly affect the quality of the feedback received.

***a) How Important is it to be Correct?***

The purpose of critiquing a decision-making exercise is not to determine whether or not the "right" decision was made. For one thing, there are no perfect solutions to the types of decisions military leaders face, so such a solution should not be demanded in training decision makers. Additionally, mistakes are essential to the learning process (Klein, 2003). Particularly in training novice decision makers, though, the correctness of the decision should not be at issue. Instead, it should be stressed to young leaders that the right decision is to make any decision. This will condition them to make decisions rapidly without concern for failure. As this conditioning process continues, simply making a decision is no longer enough--credible decisions become expected. In this context, they learn that although there are no single right decisions, some decisions are better than others (Allen, 1993).

***b) Focus on the Process***

Too often, decision-making critiques turn into debates over details and ignore what is truly important: gaining an understanding of why and how the decision was reached. There is much more to be learned from *feedback on the process* than on the outcome (Klein, 2003). The answer itself is less important than the rationale and thought process behind the answer (Brewster, 2002). Put another way, the actual decision made is less important than the thinking that went into making it (Klein, 2003).

The critique should focus on what the decision maker knew at the time of the decision, without the aid of hindsight (IOC, 1999). This is necessary to properly evaluate the decision maker's assumptions, reasoning, and deductions. It is also important to look at the decision made in the context that information available to the decision maker may have been vague or incomplete by design, in order to create uncertainty and doubt (MCDP 1-3, 1997).

***c) Significance of the Facilitator***

The person leading the critique has a tremendous influence on the quality of decision-making feedback that is or is not received. Experienced decision makers can help others identify cues and patterns that were recognized and missed (Klein, 2003).

But it takes more than decision-making experience to be able to run a useful critique. A good facilitator keeps the critique focused on the decision-making process, helps the participants see what they missed or misinterpreted, and is able to put it all in a light that makes the feedback both welcome and productive.

#### **4. It is Never Too Early to Start**

Military leaders do not have the luxury of relying solely on their real-life experience to make themselves expert decision makers. Their first real-life experience may be one of great consequence, with the lives of their subordinates and noncombatants on the line. To prepare for this "moment of truth," leaders should be introduced to decision-making early in their career. They need to optimize their learning from studying military history, practice making decisions at every opportunity, and actively seek feedback on their decisions (Athens, 1992; Klein, 2003).

#### **G. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter is to review decision-making literature relevant to this research and present it in a concise but thorough manner. The creation of an operational definition of "decision making" is central to this task, and is presented here. The relevant literature is used to demonstrate the importance of decision-making skills in military leaders, examine the two main decision-making models, and identify ways in which decision-making skills can be taught.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the research was conducted and data were collected. The general framework of the methodology is three-fold: 1) identify the priority the Naval Academy places on decision making; 2) ask those who are primarily responsible for midshipmen's professional development (i.e. the company officers) how well they think the Naval Academy develops decision-making skills in midshipmen; and 3) ask the midshipmen how well they believe the Naval Academy prepares them to be decision makers. A combination of interviews, surveys, and focus groups was used as deemed most appropriate for each source. The nature of this research is primarily qualitative, but some quantitative data were collected and analyzed as well.

#### **B. IS DECISION MAKING A PRIORITY FOR THE NAVAL ACADEMY?**

The first step was to identify if, where, and how the Naval Academy--as an institution--has explicitly stated that developing midshipmen as decision makers is a priority. This was accomplished in two ways. First, mission statements, documents, and curricula descriptions were examined. Additionally, senior leaders at the Naval Academy were interviewed to learn the importance they place on decision making as a skill in officers and what they believe the Naval Academy should be doing to train its midshipmen as decision makers.

##### **1. Research USNA Mission Statements**

The Naval Academy has a Strategic Plan (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004) that describes the Naval Academy's purpose, mission, goals, and plans for action and direction. The Strategic Plan was examined to learn if, and to what extent, decision-making training is identified as a priority for the Naval Academy. In addition to a mission statement for the Naval Academy, the Strategic Plan also includes a list of attributes USNA graduates are expected to possess. Also, the Strategic Plan lays out short-term and long-term initiatives, described as tactical and strategic initiatives, respectively. Of these initiatives, two were found to be related to decision making.

Another step was to determine where and how decision making is presented to midshipmen in the curriculum at the Naval Academy. To learn this, the Chair of the

Leadership, Ethics, and Law (LEL) Department pointed the author to the officer who is responsible for all Leadership instruction in LEL. This officer explained the Naval Academy's Professional Development Continuum, the concept that integrates all aspects of a midshipman's professional development during his or her four years at the Naval Academy. Included in this continuum are formal classes and practical experiences.

## **2. Interview Senior USNA Leadership**

In order to determine whom to interview, one first has to have a rudimentary understanding of the Naval Academy's organization and the responsibilities of different leaders. The officer primarily responsible to the Naval Academy Superintendent for midshipmen's professional development is the Commandant of Midshipmen. The Commandant's sphere of influence basically reaches everything outside of the classroom. Professional development within the classroom falls under the Division of Professional Development. Any classes related to decision making would be taught by the Leadership, Ethics, and Law (LEL) Department, which is a branch of the Division of Professional Development.

During the course of this research, there was a change of leadership in the office of the Commandant of Midshipmen. For purposes of continuity and completeness, both Commandants were interviewed to learn their views on developing midshipmen as decision makers at the Naval Academy. The interview protocols are provided in Appendices A and B, respectively. The author spoke with the Director of the Professional Development Division. The LEL Chair was also interviewed, along with a USNA Distinguished Military Professor for Leadership (see Appendix C for interview protocol). Lastly, the author discussed the ethical aspect of decision making with the Director of the Character Development Division.

For each of the formal interviews, the author provided a proposed protocol in advance to the interviewees to make the most of the limited time available for interviews with these senior leaders. The actual conduct of the interviews did not strictly follow the proposed protocol. Interviewees added personal emphasis in different areas and the interviewer asked probing questions to seek amplification of some points. Permission was granted by each interviewee to record his interview. The tapes were later transcribed to facilitate data analysis.

### **C. WHAT DO THE COMPANY OFFICERS THINK?**

A survey was deemed to be the most appropriate means of collecting data from the company officers for several reasons. For one, a complete sample (i.e.  $N = 30$ ) was desired. To interview all 30 company officers was considered to be unpractical, both in terms of time required and the difficulty in arranging times when each company officer would be able to sit down to devote time to this research. The very busy schedules of the company officers likewise made it unpractical to try to convene focus groups. Therefore, it was decided that a survey could gain the richest data with the least burden on the company officers. The author received permission from the USNA Office of Institutional Research (IR) to issue the survey. The company officer survey can be found in Appendix D.

The survey was developed in conjunction with questions for focus groups that were to be conducted with selected midshipmen. A point was made to include questions common to the company officer survey and midshipmen focus groups to enable comparison of the data collected. The survey consisted of a ranking exercise, Likert-scale questions with an opportunity for comments, and short-answer questions. This design was intended to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Comments and short answers from all the company officer surveys were compared to identify recurring themes, and quantitative data were compared with corresponding data from the midshipmen focus groups. The only demographic data solicited from the company officers were their service communities.

For purposes of efficiency, the survey was initially sent out via E-mail to all 30 company officers, with a brief explanation of the research and the contribution their responses would make. Company officers have many demands on their time, which come from many different sources, all of which insist on being a top priority. Taking this and the academic calendar into account, the author asked that the surveys be completed and returned prior to the end of the Fall semester, giving them 24 days. Follow-on reminders via various media were issued as needed, and eventually all 30 surveys were submitted. All surveys were completed as Word documents and returned via E-mail, with one exception, which was printed and responses were handwritten.

#### **D. WHAT DO THE MIDSHIPMEN THINK?**

To identify what decision-making opportunities midshipmen have in the course of their four years at the Naval Academy, midshipmen had to be placed into categories that would represent different experiences. Then a method had to be determined to best draw out the decision-making experiences and opportunities they encountered. Focus groups were used for this research, and this section explains why they were used and how they were conducted.

##### **1. A Midshipman is a Midshipman is a Midshipman...?**

Although all midshipmen go through “the Naval Academy experience,” their experiences actually vary greatly. With respect to leadership development, the most readily apparent leadership opportunities for midshipmen take place in Bancroft Hall. However, formal leadership positions and responsibilities in the Brigade of Midshipmen--albeit significant--are just one aspect of midshipmen’s lives. The author wanted to examine different Naval Academy experiences and identify decision-making opportunities associated with each. To achieve this, different categories of midshipmen were developed to identify similarities and differences among midshipmen.

For the purposes of this study, a “striper” is defined as any midshipman with three or more stripes, typically company commanders and higher. Conversely, a “non-striper” is defined as any midshipman with two stripes or less; these midshipmen are typically platoon commanders, squad leaders, or “midshipmen-in-ranks.” Additionally, an “athlete” is defined as any varsity or junior-varsity athlete. Since all midshipmen participate in some form of athletics while at the Naval Academy, this label separated “athletes” from “non-athletes,” who were defined as non-varsity/non-junior varsity athletes (i.e. midshipmen who participate in club sports or intramurals).

With these definitions established, midshipmen were placed into one of three categories. The first category was labeled “striper/non-athlete.” The second was “athlete/non-striper,” and the third was “non-striper/non-athlete.” Only midshipmen first class (i.e. seniors) were considered, since only they would have experienced the complete “four-class system” at the Naval Academy (the focus groups were conducted at the end of the Fall semester, so the midshipmen had completed three and one half years at the Naval Academy).

## **2. Why Focus Groups?**

Focus groups were considered to be the most viable means to collect data from midshipmen. Because midshipmen also are extremely busy, and they are bombarded with surveys, the author was concerned about the quality of data that might be obtained through a survey. By personally interacting with the midshipmen, the author expected to receive a greater commitment to the data solicited, resulting in richer data. To minimize the inconvenience to the participants, the focus groups were designed to take less than an hour. The author had to get permission from IR to conduct focus groups with midshipmen.

To gain reliable data, two samples of each of the three established categories of midshipmen were sought, for a total of six focus groups. A company officer solicited midshipmen nominations in accordance with the established criteria (i.e. first-class strippers/non-strippers, athletes/non-athletes) from all the company officers. From the names provided, he then built six groups of six midshipmen per focus group. The reason for this number of midshipmen per group was to try to achieve a sample that would be representative of the six battalions of midshipmen at the Naval Academy. Of the six focus groups conducted, one had all six battalions represented, and the other five had five battalions represented; 17 of the 30 companies were represented in the focus groups. The company officer developed a schedule for the focus groups to de-conflict with the participants' very busy schedules. He contacted them via E-mail, requesting they confirm that they could attend at the designated time. Alternates were designated for each group and notified in the event a primary participant could not attend.

Appendix E contains the focus group questions. The first part is a worksheet with the same ranking exercise as the one found on the company officer survey, as well as common Likert-scale questions. The second part lists the four discussion questions. Comments from these discussions were later compared across all the focus groups--and with company officer surveys--to identify recurring themes.

## **3. Conduct of the Focus Groups**

The focus groups were conducted in a conference room in Bancroft Hall. The author began by explaining this research to the midshipmen and the contribution their input would make to the research. After thanking them for participating, the author

assured them of confidentiality, that their responses would in no way be identified with them individually. The midshipmen were encouraged to be frank and honest. To assist in this, and to create a relaxed atmosphere, the author pointed out that the participants would be commissioned and have left the Naval Academy by the time the author would begin his duties as a company officer. The author did not tell them how or why they were chosen (i.e. in which category they fell) so as to not have their categorization influence their responses.

On the walls of the conference room were posted two operational definitions, “decision making” and “gut wrenching decisions,” both of which can be found in Appendix E and will be further explained in Chapter IV. After introducing these definitions, the participants completed a demographic worksheet (see Appendix F). The purpose of this worksheet was to identify leadership experiences each midshipman had had over the course of four years at the Naval Academy.

The author got the participants’ permission to record the discussion, for the same purpose as recording the interviews. The participants were assigned numbers to enable the author to later match up responses with demographic worksheets (which were labeled with the corresponding numbers), and thereby match up their opinions with their background and experiences at the Naval Academy. Participants were asked to begin each response with, “I am number 'x,' and I think...” To ensure that every participant responded to each of the discussion questions, the author varied the process of soliciting responses. Specifically, sometimes volunteers went first and then the rest were asked if they had anything to add, and other times individuals were called on. In addition to ensuring a response from everyone for each question, this also varied the order in which responses were given, in an attempt to minimize one person’s responses from potentially influencing all the others who followed.

The focus groups were conducted as planned, with only a few minor glitches. Two midshipmen assigned to one of the "striper/non-athlete" focus groups were not stripers; they should have been in a "non-striper/non-athlete" group. This is noted for two reasons. First, their oral responses to the discussion questions might have differed if they were in a different group/category. Second, because they were treated as "non-

striper/non-athletes" in the data analysis, this affected the N for each category, which was intended to be 12. Instead, there were 10 "striper/non-athletes," 12 "athlete/non-striper," and 14 "non-striper/non-athletes." Another midshipman, an "athlete/non-striper" missed his scheduled focus group but participated in a "non-striper/non-athlete" focus group; this could possibly have affected his oral responses for the same reason as the two midshipmen just mentioned. Lastly, the oral responses to the last question for one of the focus groups ("athlete/non-striper") were unintentionally recorded over before they were transcribed; two of the six participants responded to an E-mail request asking that they E-mail their answer to the author as best they could remember having answered it during the focus group; the effect of this loss is believed to be minimal since the overwhelming majority of the data was captured and analyzed.

## **E. OTHER DATA**

In an effort to manage the scope of this research, data collection was primarily focused on the interviews of senior Naval Academy leadership, company officer surveys, and midshipmen focus groups. In the course of the research, however, several areas central to the development of decision-making skills in Naval Academy midshipmen were uncovered. In an effort to present the most comprehensive study possible within the constraints of this thesis, these areas were pursued.

### **1. Midshipmen Performance Evaluations**

One way to determine whether or not midshipmen are being developed as decision makers at the Naval Academy is to find out if their decision making is evaluated. To do this, the author examined how midshipmen's performance is evaluated to identify the extent to which their decision-making abilities and performance are considered. The Naval Academy uses Navy fitness reports and evaluation reports. The Marine Corps fitness report was also analyzed to compare it--relative to decision making--with the Navy evaluations.

### **2. Sexual Assault and Decision Making**

An area in which the Naval Academy focuses on the decision-making process is with regard to sexual assault. To gather data in this area, the author contacted the USNA Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) director. The SAVI director provided the SAVI classroom presentations that are given to midshipmen.

### **3. USNA Honor System**

The Naval Academy's Honor System was mentioned several times by midshipmen during focus groups as being an area in which midshipmen have to make difficult decisions. In following up on this, the Director of Character Development, suggested the author speak with the Ethics Advisor to the Commandant of Midshipmen, to discuss the decision-making opportunities for midshipmen involved with the Honor System process. The Ethics Advisor explained the process, and further referred the author to the midshipman first class (1/C) who was the current Brigade of Midshipmen Honor Chair. The author arranged with the Honor Chair to observe an Honor Board. The author also interviewed the Honor Chair about his billet, its responsibilities, and the nature of the decisions he has to make in the performance of his duties as Honor Chair.

#### **F. DATA ANALYSIS**

The data were analyzed at several levels. At one level, the statements about the importance of decision making made by the senior leaders in their interviews with the author were compared with areas of the Strategic Plan that addressed decision making to see if they were in alignment. These two sources of data were then compared with the responses from the company officers and midshipmen to see if there was convergence.

Next, the responses from the company officers and midshipmen were compared with each other. To facilitate this, the company officer survey and midshipmen focus groups were designed to have common questions. These included a ranking exercise, four Likert-scale questions that reported relative ratings of agreement with statements presented to the respondents, and two short answer/discussion questions. The ranking exercise and Likert-scale questions provided quantitative data, which were analyzed by computing frequencies (presented later in this thesis as histograms) and means. The short answer/discussion questions provided qualitative data, and these were analyzed by comparing the responses to identify trends and areas of convergence and divergence.

Lastly, the additional data collected from other sources were analyzed. The midshipmen performance evaluation system was examined to learn if or how decision making was included, and then was compared to the Naval Academy's stated decision-making objectives to determine if the performance evaluations contribute to achieving these goals. Likewise, the SAVI Program was analyzed to learn whether or not it

contributes to achieving the Naval Academy's decision-making objectives. Finally, the Honor System was examined to determine whether or not it achieves the same.

#### **G. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The methodology of this research was designed to determine what priority the senior leadership of the Naval Academy places on developing midshipmen as decision makers, and to assess how well the Naval Academy accomplishes this task. All aspects of midshipmen's experiences at the Naval Academy were taken into account. A wide range of research methods was used to most effectively and completely collect data--both qualitative and quantitative--for further analysis.

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## **IV. DATA ANALYSIS**

(As an officer) you've got to make (life-and-death tactical) decisions in a split second. How do you do that? How do you handle it?...What's the training that you've had in advance and how well does that prepare you to act instinctively? Because when you have only two seconds to make a decision, you can't go through a very long analysis (personal communication, February 10, 2004).

Captain Charles J. Leidig  
Commandant of Midshipmen, U.S. Naval Academy

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to organize, present, and analyze the data collected for this research. After explaining and acknowledging the limitations of the data, the data will be presented. The data have been grouped into three main categories: 1) the importance the Naval Academy places on developing decision-making skills in midshipmen, 2) how midshipmen are taught decision making, and 3) opportunities midshipmen have to make decisions.

### **B. LIMITATIONS OF DATA**

The first aspect in which the data are limited is the samples. The author primarily sought data from three sources: the senior leadership at the Naval Academy, the company officers, and selected midshipmen. The author had adequate access to senior leaders, and all four interviews requested were granted. As for the company officers, all 30 completed the survey, so the sample of company officers was equal to the population (i.e. 100%). Regarding the midshipmen, the author was able to conduct focus groups with the requested number of midshipmen (i.e. 36) representing the three designated categories (stripers, athletes, and neither). Because of the scope of the research and the choice to use focus groups, however, the sample of midshipmen was necessarily small (N = 36 in a population of 990 first-class midshipmen). While the percentage of the population is low, the author's goal was to gain the richest data possible from a relatively small sample by creating a stratified random sample.

The second limitation of the data concerns the extent to which the topic of the research may have affected the responses given by the participants. This phenomenon,

known as reactivity, occurs when participants' responses are influenced by the demand characteristics of the data (i.e. influenced by what they believe the research is seeking). Care was taken in designing interview protocols, the company officer survey, and focus group protocols, not to make assertions or ask leading questions. This is why, for example, the company officer survey had both Likert-scale and short-answer questions, and even the former provided the opportunity for additional comments. Additionally, in the case of the company officers and midshipmen, anonymity was promised to the participants in an effort to encourage candidness and lessen the reactivity effect.

For all three sample groups (senior leadership, company officers, and midshipmen), a minimal amount of information to introduce the research. It was emphasized that the purpose of the research was simply to *assess* what the Naval Academy does to develop decision-making skills in midshipmen, with no indication given of what the author or anyone else might think the Naval Academy should or should not be doing in this area. That said, the very fact that the research was being conducted may have caused some to deduce that a degree of importance of decision making was being inferred, and this may have influenced their responses.

The three sample groups may have been influenced by the nature of the research to different degrees. The senior leaders were probably least influenced because of their many years of experience and positions of authority. The company officers were probably not influenced much because they have had several years of commissioned time and experience to shape their thoughts. This, combined with the fact that they provided their data in the form of completing a survey (i.e. no face-to-face interaction with the author), probably minimized any reactivity bias.

The last group--the midshipmen--likely was most influenced by the topic and the forum in which the data were solicited. For one thing, they have the least amount of experience on which to base their responses. Further, because of the nature of their environment, as officer candidates sitting in a focus group being led by a commissioned officer, their responses were probably the most influenced of the three groups of participants. The bias expected is that in their responses they may have placed a greater importance on decision making than they otherwise might have assigned. For example,

in the exercise in which they ranked the different USNA graduate attributes (presented later in this chapter), decision making might not have been ranked so highly if the midshipmen had been told that the purpose of the focus group had to do with another attribute (e.g. equal opportunity or effective communication). This was taken into account by the author in selecting the method to collect data from midshipmen, and in spite of the potential drawbacks mentioned here, focus groups were still considered to be the best medium.

The last limitation of the data concerns the nature of the data. The company officer survey and midshipmen focus groups solicited *opinions* about the importance of decision making. There was no metric or evaluation of decision-making effectiveness, however. Nor did the scope of this research include collecting input from commanders in the Fleet regarding Naval Academy graduates' performance as decision makers. It should be noted, however, that even that data would have been a matter of opinion, albeit opinions of experienced naval officers; decision making is difficult to measure in the Fleet just as it is at the Naval Academy.

### **C. IMPORTANCE USNA PLACES ON DEVELOPING DECISION MAKING IN MIDSHIPMEN**

The extent to which developing decision-making skills in midshipmen is an important part of their development was examined in two ways. The first is what is actually *stated*, both in what is written down in the form of mission statements and objectives, and by senior leaders in interviews. The second way is equally, if not more important, than the first, and that is how much importance the company officers and midshipmen *perceive* the Naval Academy places on the development of decision-making skills. This is provided by selected responses given in the company officer survey and midshipmen focus groups.

#### **1. Stated Importance of Decision Making**

In a large organization like the Naval Academy, there are many competing demands for limited resources such as time, personnel, infrastructure, and funding. These resources must be properly allocated to best achieve an organization's goals. To do this, the senior leadership of an organization must identify its priorities and then state them in some manner. To determine what priority the senior leadership at the Naval Academy

places on the development of decision-making skills in midshipmen, the author examined the Naval Academy's Strategic Plan (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004) and interviewed several key senior leaders.

***a) USNA Strategic Plan***

The Naval Academy's Strategic Plan was first published in 1998 and was subsequently revised and published in 2001 and again in 2002. The purpose of the plan is "to ensure the Naval Academy avoids mission drift and maintains the appropriate balance between academic, professional, and athletic programs." It includes a mission statement, a vision statement, attributes of Naval Academy graduates, institutional focus areas, and numerous initiatives to achieve the Naval Academy's goals (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004). The author examined the Strategic Plan to learn where and how decision making is addressed.

***i. Mission and Vision Statements***

A mission provides an organization with a sense of purpose. It clarifies why it should be doing what it does. It enables key decision makers to focus discussion on what is truly important. A mission statement is a declaration of organizational purpose. Mission statements vary in length, but are typically short (Bryson, 1995). The foundation of the Naval Academy's Strategic Plan is the Naval Academy's mission statement,

To develop midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty in order to provide graduates who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004).

There is no mention of decision making in the Naval Academy's mission statement. By Bryson's standard (1995)--which is commonly accepted--this is not surprising. For an institution with as broad a charter as the Naval Academy, the mission statement would not be the appropriate place to address the development of midshipmen's decision-making skills. Even several levels below, in the Division of Professional Development's mission statement,

(T)o prepare Midshipmen to be professional officers in the Naval and Marine Corps services. The courses offered by our academic departments -- Leadership, Ethics, & Law, and Seamanship & Navigation -- develop skills in the classroom environment. The Department of Professional Programs provides the opportunity for Midshipmen to move out of the classroom and experience life at sea with operational fleets. The staff and faculty are comprised of both military and civilian instructors providing a diversified learning environment for the Midshipmen (USNA Division of Professional Development, 2004)

there is no mention of decision making. Where, then, might it be found?

From the mission statement, the Strategic Plan produces a vision statement, "(To) provide leaders of great character, competence, vision and drive to transform the Navy and Marine Corps and serve the nation in a century of promise and uncertainty" (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004). At this level, there is still no explicit mention of decision making, but there are several elements that are closely related to decision making. One is "character," which is an essential component of decision making. At the Kriegsakademie prior to World War II, the Germans defined character as the ability of an officer to make a decision quickly under the conditions of combat and to take aggressive action to execute that decision (Allen, 1993). Also mentioned in the vision statement is "competence," of which decision making is an indispensable component in a military leader (McBreen, 1998; Nye, 1986; Schmitt, 1988). Lastly, the term "uncertainty" is intrinsic to military decision making and is found throughout the literature (Allen, 1993; Athens, 1992; Clausewitz, 1984; Klein, 2003; MCDP 1, 1997; Schmitt, 1988, 1995).

## ii. Graduate Attributes

The Strategic Plan lists "Strategic Outcomes," which are described as the results the Naval Academy wants to produce in the institution and its graduates. Among these Strategic Outcomes are listed nine "Graduate Attributes" (these graduate attributes are not numbered or necessarily ranked in the Strategic Plan, but have been numbered here for ease of reference). According to these, Naval Academy graduates are:

1. Prepared to lead in combat
2. Courageous leaders who take responsibility for their personal and professional decisions and actions
3. Role models of ethical behavior and moral conduct

4. Exemplars of academic, technical and tactical competence
5. Individuals with a passion and commitment to lifelong learning and physical fitness
6. Highly effective communicators
7. Leaders who recognize and value individual excellence regardless of gender or cultural and ethnic background
8. Able to understand and integrate geopolitical complexities in their decision-making across the spectrum of military operations
9. Patriots who epitomize the rich heritage, honor and traditions of the Navy, Marine Corps and our country (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004).

In several of these attributes, the importance of decision making is explicit, in others it is implied. In regard to the first attribute, the literature has shown that to lead in combat, one must be able to make decisions (Athens, 1992; MCDP 1, 1997; MCDP 1-3, 1997; McBreen, 1998; Nye, 1986; Schmitt, 1988). Therefore, if the Naval Academy wants to prepare its graduates to lead in combat, it can be deduced that graduates should be prepared as decision makers.

The second attribute addresses both personal and professional decisions. The need for leaders to accept responsibility for their decisions, and the courage this often requires, are two frequent themes in the literature (MCDP 1, 1997; MCDP 6, 1997; Schmitt, 1988; Wedemeyer, 1938). The fourth attribute lists tactical competence, of which effective decision making is an integral part (MCDP 1-3, 1997; McBreen, 1998; Nye, 1986). The eighth attribute recognizes the complexities of the decisions Naval Academy graduates will face in their service as commissioned officers. Of the nine attributes, four are explicitly or implicitly related to decision making.

### iii. Decision-Making Initiatives

To achieve its goals, the Naval Academy developed 27 Strategic Initiatives and 16 Tactical Initiatives, grouped into 8 Institutional Focus Areas. Of these initiatives, 2 are explicitly related to decision making. Under the area of Academic Excellence, there is a Tactical Initiative entitled, "Assess Impact of USNA Culture on Critical Thinking and Decision-Making." The initiative's purpose is to "identify ways to

present midshipmen with opportunities to think critically and make decisions." The initiative description is, "1) Formalize definition of critical thinking and decision-making; and 2) Identify opportunities to include embedded critical thinking, decision-making and consequence critique in the daily Midshipmen routine." The executive sponsor for this initiative is the Commandant of Midshipmen (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004).

Under the area of Leadership and Professional Excellence, there is a Strategic Initiative entitled, "Decision Making/Mental Agility Practicum." The initiative's purpose is to "improve the decision-making skills of all midshipmen through classroom discussion and practical lab exercises. The initiative description is, "1) Create a training practicum with a practical professional focus on decision-making and mental agility; and 2) Include a combination of theoretical classroom training, computer simulations and an outdoor venue (envisioned at North Severn) that incorporates field experience." The executive sponsor for this initiative is the Commandant of Midshipmen (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004).

Each of these initiatives was introduced by Marine Colonel John R. Allen while he was the Commandant of Midshipmen. As will be shown in the next section, Colonel Allen is a staunch proponent of decision-making training for midshipmen, believing that decision making is central to midshipmen's professional development in preparing them to serve as commissioned officers. The degree to which these initiatives will be realized after Colonel Allen's September, 2003 departure remains to be seen.

#### ***b) Interviews with Senior USNA Leaders***

The following senior leaders at the Naval Academy were interviewed for this thesis: Marine Colonel John R. Allen, Commandant of Midshipmen until September, 2003; Navy Captain Charles J. Leidig, Commandant of Midshipmen since September, 2003; Navy Captain Richard Thayer, Director of Professional Development Division; Navy Commander Lee Schonenberg, Chair of the LEL Department, with Marine Colonel Arthur J. Athens, Naval Academy Distinguished Professor of Leadership. From these interviews, the author was able to identify the importance senior leaders at the Naval Academy place on developing decision-making skills in midshipmen.

i. What Should a Naval Academy Graduate be?

This is one of the most fundamental questions the senior leadership at the Naval Academy has to answer. What skills should a graduate possess? How much time and resources should be spent on academics in the classroom compared to military training opportunities? The Strategic Plan was devised to answer these questions. The senior leaders interviewed for this research amplified the goals and objectives that are stated in the Strategic Plan.

Colonel Allen believes that--first and foremost--a Naval Academy graduate should be a decision maker. When asked about the relationship between leadership and decision making, he responded, "You cannot be a leader without being a decision maker." Colonel Allen explained that making decisions is the unique role of the officer on the battlefield--any battlefield: in the air, on the ground, on or under the sea. Therefore, he thinks the Naval Academy should create a graduate who has an absolute understanding and recognition that being an officer is about decision making (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003).

For Colonel Allen, every aspect of an officer's development should contribute to his or her ability to make sound decisions. According to the former Commandant, the instruction midshipmen at the Naval Academy receive in leadership, character, and ethics is unmatched anywhere in the country. He believes the outcome of decision-making training at the Naval Academy should be a graduate--regardless of warfare specialty--who is predisposed to decide, at both the moral and intellectual level (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003).

Captain Leidig, the officer who succeeded Colonel Allen as Commandant of Midshipmen, believes the test of a junior officer is when he or she is faced with a tough decision that involves honor and leadership. To be a Naval Academy graduate, he says, 1) one must have honor, and 2) one must know how to lead. Captain Leidig thinks of decision making as a subset and an important building block of honor and leadership; somebody who acts with honor and leadership has to be a decision maker to achieve his or her goals (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

Captain Leidig wants to graduate officers from the Naval Academy who will "act with honor instinctively." This means that when confronted with a decision that requires an ethical or moral decision, one makes the right decision because one has the instinct to do it (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004). Colonel Allen speaks of this same instinct as being a predisposition, and in the case of decision making, is the product of conditioning midshipmen to make decisions, to not only provide them with a pool of knowledge and values, but also to develop in them the ability to interrogate that pool when confronted with a decision (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003).

Several themes arose from the interviews. First, leadership and decision making are inseparable, and midshipmen must understand their obligation to be decision makers as officers. Second, an officer's (and therefore a midshipman's) decision making must be rooted in character. Third, honor must become instinctive for midshipmen so that they will be able to make the right decisions as officers. Lastly, it is important to identify what types of decisions the senior leadership at the Naval Academy wants midshipmen to have to make as part of their professional development.

#### ii. Does Anything Need to Change?

Some might say that the Naval Academy produces officers and therefore produces decision makers. They would point out that whether or not decision making is formally and explicitly taught, graduates have served this nation and led with distinction for more than a century and a half. They would argue that, however it is that Naval Academy midshipmen are learning decision making, it must be good enough.

The careers of the two Commandants are an interesting study in contrasts and similarities relative to leadership and decision making. Colonel Allen has spent his entire professional life purposefully, systematically, and passionately studying decision making. Captain Leidig, on the other hand, said, "I don't know of any place in my naval career that somebody tried to talk to me about decision making at a theoretical level." In fact, he suggested that at the academic or theoretical level, he may not have any decision-making expertise (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004). And yet, like Colonel Allen, Captain Leidig is an expert decision maker.

Although Captain Leidig may not have what he would describe as an academic background in decision making, in his discussion of decision making with the author, he raised many of the same elements found in decision-making literature: process input (i.e. assess the situation) and recognize patterns (Allen, 1993; Klein, 1989, 2003; MCDP 1-3, 1997; Schmitt, 1995); there are no perfect solutions in tactics (MCDP 1, 1997; Schmitt, 1988); military decision makers cannot wait for complete information (Klein, 2003; MCDP 1, 1997; Schmitt, 1995); the utility of scenario-based training (Brewster, 2002; Klein, 2003; MCDP 1-3, 1997; Schmitt, 1988; Wedemeyer, 1938); the importance of feedback (Brewster, 2002; Klein, 1989, 2003; Schmitt, 1995); and examine the thought process rather than just the decision made (Allen, 1993; Brewster, 2002; Klein, 1989, 2003, MCDP 1-3, 1997).

How is it that these two Naval Academy graduates--who went on to serve in different services for more than two and a half decades, and who had such different decision-making educations--could both end up expert decision makers? In the case of Captain Leidig, it was gained through experience (i.e. implicit); in the case of Colonel Allen, it was through both experience (implicit) and study (explicit). The question might be asked, then, whether or not anything needs to be done differently.

As the literature makes clear, military leaders often do not have the luxury of gaining the necessary experience over time before they are confronted with decisions that have great consequences (MCDP 1-3, 1997; Klein, 2003), and that everything possible should be done to accelerate the process (MCDP 1, 1997). A former commander of a nuclear submarine, Captain Leidig--a product of an implicit process--is an expert decision maker. The literature shows, however, that an *explicit* process of developing decision-making expertise would result in better decision makers earlier in their commissioned service, rather than wait to gain experiences as they come along (Brewster, 2002; Klein, 1997, 2003; MCDP 1-3, 1997; Nye, 1986; Schmitt, 1995). As a post-command submarine officer serving as the Commandant of Midshipmen, Captain Leidig is an example of how the implicit process of learning decision making can be a success. The argument for the explicit process, however, is that rather than wait for the Captain Leidigs to rise to the top, there are things the Naval Academy can do to produce more Captain Leidigs and propel them to decision-making expertise faster.

In this light, Colonel Allen believes the Naval Academy needs to spend more time crafting the imperative nature, the urgency, of the need to develop decision-making skills. He says that the Naval Academy has to "paint the picture of the imperative for decision making so clearly to the midshipmen that they are just nervous at any given time as to whether or not they are doing enough to prepare themselves...to make decisions" (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003). That imperative has never been stronger than it is today. During the Cold War, it may have been true that junior officers were not expected--or even allowed--to make independent decisions, but today's threat and military operations require an unprecedented degree of independent decision making and flexibility (Ruggero, 2001).

Colonel Allen's vision for the Naval Academy, in terms of developing decision-making skills in midshipmen, is to have an institutional commitment to creating decision makers. He envisions an environment for decision making, a culture of decision making that permeates all aspects of a midshipman's life (i.e. Bancroft Hall, academics, and athletics). Leaders at the Naval Academy must resist the temptation to believe that decision making can only occur in the Division of Professional Development. His desired outcome is to take all the individual efforts currently underway in leadership, character, and ethics that have such positive, albeit non-integrated, effects on midshipmen and combine them to explicitly produce capable decision makers (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003).

Captain Leidig agrees that an area in which the Naval Academy could do better would be to combine these separate efforts under a single aegis. In pursuit of this, the Naval Academy has formed a Leadership Task Force to do a comprehensive assessment of how leadership is taught and experienced at the Naval Academy. Captain Leidig is not certain that the arrows would necessarily converge on decision making, but he acknowledges the important role decision making plays in developing honor and leadership. He also agrees with Colonel Athens, the Distinguished Leadership Professor, that leadership experiences alone do not necessarily equate to better decision makers (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004; A.J. Athens, personal communication, July 29, 2003).

Captain Leidig sees other shortcomings in the way midshipmen presently are developed relative to decision making. Colonel Athens suggested to the author that the Naval Academy curriculum prepares midshipmen for administrative leadership decisions, but not tactical decisions (A.J. Athens, personal communication, July 29, 2003). Captain Leidig also has noted the absence of tactics in decision-making training at the Naval Academy. In the ethical decisions he has observed midshipmen discuss in Character Development Seminars, he says the situations are very real and very ethical, but they are not tactical. He believes midshipmen should also be exposed to "tactical ethical scenarios" like the type a Navy pilot would encounter in rapidly closing on a high-value target only to discover there are non-combatants on the objective as well (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

Another problem Captain Leidig sees with decision making at the Naval Academy is that too often decisions are made by officers instead of midshipmen. He attributes this in part to a lack of trust on the part of the officers. As a result, midshipmen have been trained to seek approval of an officer when making a decision. One of the more prominent problems with this is that if a midshipman has a decision approved by an officer, then that midshipman does not have to take responsibility for the consequences of that decision (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

### iii. What Should be Done?

As previously mentioned, the common debate among senior leaders at the Naval Academy is not so much whether or not midshipmen should be trained in decision making, but rather *how* decision making should be taught. Captain Leidig said that if one wants to teach decision making at the Naval Academy, then the question one must ask is, "What is it (we) want (midshipmen) to make decisions about?" He believes it is important that decision-making training be related to professional skills. The Division of Professional Development focuses on core competencies Naval Academy graduate should possess. In Captain Leidig's opinion, the way to generate decision-making opportunities is to focus on core competencies and see what decision-making can be taught or extracted (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

Colonel Allen believes the challenge at the Naval Academy is to depict the universal requirement for making decisions--regardless of service community--and develop a universal approach to teaching how to make decisions. He thinks the Naval Academy should create intellectual processes that both create the awareness for the need for decision making, and the intellectual and moral processes to facilitate decision making. He envisions "creating a culture that calls constantly for decisions, and then judges the decisions on--not the rightness or wrongness--but the consequences, and then give feedback to the decision maker on how he or she could have done better." The Naval Academy should be shaped in a way that confronts midshipmen with making decisions every day, in all aspects of life (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003).

Although Captain Leidig recognizes that there is probably some decision-making theory that could be taught, he believes--as per his experience as a submarine officer--experiential learning is the most effective way to learn decision making. The training done on the Naval Academy's Yard Patrol (YP) boats is an area rife with potential for decision-making opportunities, he says. Presently, the YP training is done in a very rote manner. Midshipmen have to demonstrate a set of skills, but no one sits down with them and talks about the decisions that have to be made underway. The instruction does not go far enough to teach the midshipmen decision making (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

One example Captain Leidig cited is the "man overboard" drill done on the YPs. Beyond mastering the procedure, midshipmen could be confronted with a number of scenarios that require decision making. For example, the midshipman performing the drill could be told by a controller that the YP's rudder has ceased to work properly, or that an engine has failed at a critical time. This would test a midshipman's ability to react to something different. It would combine tactics, academics, and require creativity. Although there is not enough time or YPs for all 4000 midshipmen to experience this first-hand, many could learn by observing one midshipman in action and then participate in the critique (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

Another opportunity for decision-making training lies with the completion of the new "full-bridge" ship simulator in Luce Hall. Much as aircraft simulators do for pilots, this simulator is designed to duplicate the conditions on the bridge of a Navy ship. Captain Leidig believes this simulator will give the Naval Academy the ability to run midshipmen through countless realistic and challenging decision-making scenarios (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

Still another area with great potential for decision-making training is the Saturday Morning Training midshipmen conduct, says Colonel Allen. This weekly training is mandatory for fourth-class midshipmen, and is normally conducted by upperclass midshipmen. Too often, Colonel Allen hears officers and midshipmen complain about the poor quality of Saturday Morning Training. He attributes this to midshipmen not being given enough guidance on how to conduct training. Colonel Allen would like to see Saturday Morning Training be designated as a decision-making and leadership laboratory (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003).

As the Director of the Division of Professional Development, Captain Thayer is constantly seeking decision-making opportunities for midshipmen, especially for ways to complement the theory learned in the classroom. His goal is to find ways to get midshipmen into unfamiliar environments and get them to think rationally. He finds it difficult to replicate the conditions of combat decision-making at the Naval Academy, and so the staff in Professional Development tries to do as much as it can with Summer Training Programs, but even that is very artificial, Captain Thayer says. In addition to training on YPs, Vice Admiral Rodney Rempt, the Superintendent of the Naval Academy, has stated very emphatically that he believes sailing can provide superb experiential leadership training, full of decision making with consequences. For the Naval Academy truly to be a "leadership laboratory," Captain Thayer believes that midshipmen must be allowed to err, and that Summer Training Programs like sailing are opportunities to achieve this (R. Thayer, personal communication, March 30, 2004).

### ***c) Summary of Stated Importance of Decision Making***

The importance the Naval Academy places on decision making is articulated both in the Strategic Plan and in the words of its senior leaders. Of the nine Graduate Attributes in the Strategic Plan, four (i.e. nearly half) address decision making.

The senior leadership wants graduates who understand their obligation as officers to make decisions, and to have the moral, intellectual, and ethical foundations to make the right decisions. The senior leaders want to take greater advantage of existing opportunities and create an environment in which midshipmen are confronted with decisions in all aspects (professional, athletic, academic) and get feedback on their decision-making processes. The desired endstate is expressed by Captain Thayer: "We want officers, regardless of (service) community, to be able to make decisions" (R. Thayer, personal communication, March 30, 2004).

## **2. Perceived Importance of Decision Making**

What is *said* to be important by the senior leadership in an organization is not always what is *perceived* to be important by those who carry out policy or by those who are the object of policy. To find out to what extent the senior leaders' vision and goals related to the development of decision-making skills in Naval Academy midshipmen are being realized, the author collected data from company officers and midshipmen. The data from the company officers were garnered via survey and from the midshipmen in focus groups conducted by the author.

### ***a) Graduate Attribute Ranking Exercise***

The Graduate Attributes listed in the Strategic Plan are not necessarily listed in order of importance; at least they are not presented as being such. For this research, the author asked both the company officers and the focus-group midshipmen to rank the attributes "in the order of importance (they) place upon (each attribute) as being necessary for a USNA graduate" (see Appendices D & E). To facilitate the ranking exercise, the author converted the sentences explaining the attributes in the Strategic Plan to "bullets," or short, concise phrases. In this conversion process, the author also managed to consolidate the attributes from nine sentences into seven bullets without losing the spirit of the original. This was done to ease the ranking exercise; ranking seven attributes seemed cumbersome enough, with nine being rather unwieldy.

Both the company officers and the midshipmen ranked "Capable Decision Maker" second only to "Person of Character" (see Table 1). When one takes into account that character is fundamental to decision making as well as all other aspects of leadership,

these responses demonstrate that both company officers and midshipmen share the senior leadership's belief that decision making is very important for military leaders.

Table 1. Relative Importance Rankings of Seven USNA Graduate Attributes

| Company Officer Rankings of<br>Seven USNA Graduate Attributes                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Midshipmen Rankings of<br>Seven USNA Graduate Attributes                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Person of Character</li> <li>2. Capable Decision Maker</li> <li>3. Effective Communicator</li> <li>4. Committed to Equal Opportunity</li> <li>5. Physically Fit</li> <li>6. Geopolitically Astute</li> <li>7. High Academic GPA</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Person of Character</li> <li>2. Capable Decision Maker</li> <li>3. Effective Communicator</li> <li>4. Physically Fit</li> <li>5. Geopolitically Astute</li> <li>6. Committed to Equal Opportunity</li> <li>7. High Academic GPA</li> </ol> |

Table 2 shows how "Capable Decision Maker" was ranked (one through seven) by company officers and midshipmen. Of the company officers, 21 of 30 (or 70%) ranked "Capable Decision Maker" first or second (there was one outlier who ranked it sixth). Of the midshipmen, 29 of 36 (or 80.6%) ranked it first or second. Interestingly, 10 midshipmen (27.8%) ranked "Capable Decision Maker" ahead of "Person of Character," compared to only 3 company officers (10%). This can probably be attributed to midshipmen's responses being more greatly biased by the demand characteristics of the data, as addressed previously in the discussion of limitations of the data. Nonetheless, both the company officers and the midshipmen rank the same three attributes in the same order at the top of the list--Person of Character, Capable Decision Maker, and Effective Communicator--all of which are closely related constructs, and therefore any possible reactivity on the part of the midshipmen does not detract from the significance of the high ranking assigned to "Capable Decision Maker."

Table 2. Relative Importance Rankings of "Capable Decision Maker" Among Seven USNA Graduate Attributes

| Ranking of "Capable Decision Maker" Among Seven USNA Graduate Attributes | Number & (Percentage) of Company Officers | Number & (Percentage) of Midshipmen |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1st                                                                      | 3 (10.0)                                  | 10 (27.8)                           |
| 2nd                                                                      | 18 (60.0)                                 | 19 (52.8)                           |
| 3rd                                                                      | 8 (26.7)                                  | 7 (19.4)                            |
| 4th                                                                      | 0 (0)                                     | 0 (0)                               |
| 5th                                                                      | 0 (0)                                     | 0 (0)                               |
| 6th                                                                      | 1 (3.3)                                   | 0 (0)                               |
| 7th                                                                      | 0 (0)                                     | 0 (0)                               |
|                                                                          | N = 30                                    | N = 36                              |

***b) Should Midshipmen be Taught Decision Making?***

In producing commissioned officers, the leadership at the Naval Academy teaches the midshipmen as much as possible with the time and resources available. There are countless skills, techniques, and bits of knowledge that would be *useful* to midshipmen. Within the constraints of time and resources, however, decisions must be made about priorities. What *must* midshipmen know? The leadership defines these things that midshipmen must know as "core competencies" (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

In light of these competing demands for time and resources, company officers and midshipmen were asked the extent to which they agree with the statement, "It is important that midshipmen's decision-making skills are developed while at the Naval Academy" (see Appendices D & E). A Likert scale was used for the responses, with a scale of "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree). Figure 2 presents the company officers' and midshipmen's responses.

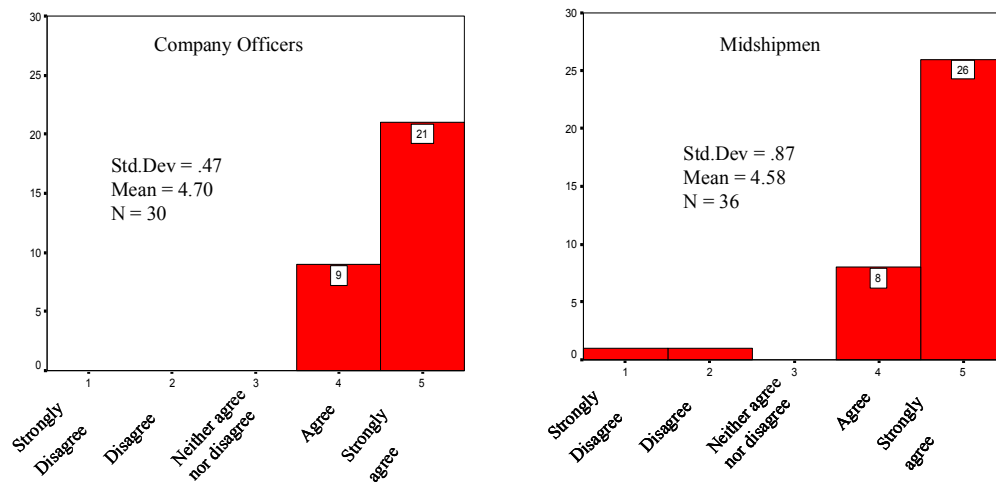


Figure 2. Agreement Ratings That it is Important to Develop Decision-Making Skills in Midshipmen

Figure 2 shows that all 30 company officers (100%) either agree or strongly agree with this statement. Of 36 midshipmen, 34 (or 94.4%) either agree or strongly agree (see Figure 2). Of the midshipmen sampled, one disagreed and another strongly disagreed. In reviewing all of the responses of these two midshipmen--both of whom are in the "striper/non-athlete" category--it is possible that the one who strongly disagreed may have misunderstood the Likert scale and inverted his responses. Even if this is not the case, the overwhelming majority of midshipmen, regardless of category (striper, athlete, neither), agree that it is important to develop decision-making skills in midshipmen at the Naval Academy, as do all of the company officers.

In addition to the Likert-scale response, the company officers were given the opportunity to make additional comments concerning the importance of teaching decision making to midshipmen. Samples of these comments can be found in Appendix G. In sum, however, they said that the Fleet expects the Naval Academy to teach midshipmen how to make the right decisions; that early development of decision-making skills is important; that the Naval Academy provides a controlled environment that should be conducive to decision-making development; and that not only should decision-

making opportunities be emphasized to midshipmen, but midshipmen should not be allowed to circumvent such opportunities (see Appendix G).

### ***C) Do Midshipmen Understand the Importance of Decision Making?***

The responses given in the Graduate Attribute ranking exercise (see Tables 1 & 2) and the previous question (see Figure 2) demonstrate the importance midshipmen place on decision making. To get the company officers' perspective on the midshipmen, they were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Midshipmen understand the importance of developing decision-making skills to prepare them to be officers" (see Appendix D). Figure 3 presents their responses.

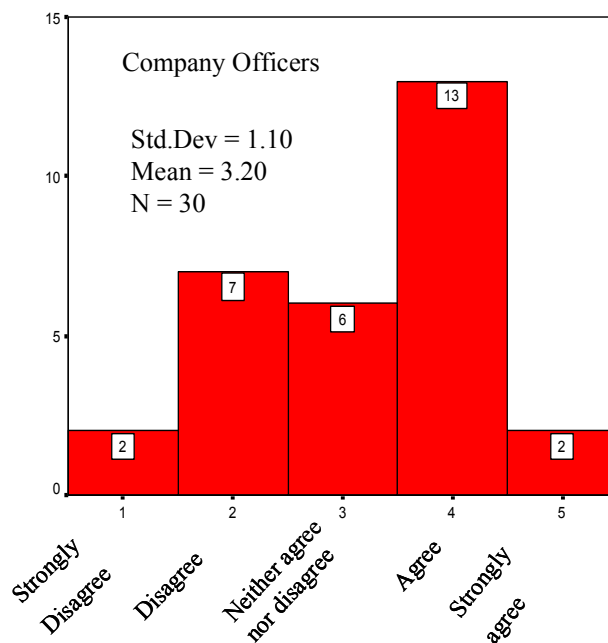


Figure 3. Agreement Ratings That Midshipmen Understand the Importance of Decision-Making Skills to Prepare to be Officers

There is a sizeable drop-off between the opinions expressed by the midshipmen and the company officers on this point. Whereas 94.4% of midshipmen said they believe it is important that they develop decision-making skills while at the Naval Academy (see Figure 2), only 50% (15 of 30) of the company officers agree or strongly agree that the midshipmen understand the importance of decision making; 30% of the company officers (9 of 30) either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement (see Figure 3).

This could be a case of "they don't know what they don't know." As applied here, this expression would mean that the company officers, who have served in the Fleet as officers and have seen what will be required of the midshipmen upon commissioning, are less confident the midshipmen "get it" than the midshipmen are themselves. Several comments by the company officers support this interpretation. The company officers said that some midshipmen "get it," but many do not, and likely will not until after they are commissioned; that midshipmen do not have a good understanding of the consequences that will be associated with the decisions they will make as officers; and that training is not presented to midshipmen in terms of decision making. One company officer said the following:

Midshipmen do not have enough life experience to understand the burden of responsibility...It is not until they get into the Fleet and actually see the ramifications of their good and bad decisions that they really "learn" and "understand" what we are trying to teach them here. Until then, we are just building a foundation of character and judgment that can be later applied (see Appendix H).

This comment is very closely aligned with a comment Captain Leidig made in his interview with the author. He was discussing his focus on honor and leadership and was not convinced that this would necessarily produce expert decision makers. What he hopes to achieve at a minimum, however, is to get midshipmen to "act with honor instinctively" and "lead from the front with confidence," and at least then the Fleet will have a product which it can take to the next level of decision-making expertise (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

#### ***d) Midshipmen Performance Evaluations***

In addition to asking the senior leadership, company officers, and midshipmen what importance they attach to decision making, another indicator is how midshipmen's performance is evaluated. One would expect that if decision making is considered to be an important skill for midshipmen, then they would be evaluated on how well they make decisions and would receive feedback on their performance. Detailed guidance on whom to evaluate, what, when, and how to evaluate, and who does the evaluating is found in the Commandant's instruction, "Midshipman Aptitude Evaluation and Counseling System" (Commandant of Midshipmen, 2003).

Midshipmen are supposed to receive feedback on their performance on a regular basis in the form of counseling. This counseling is normally verbal, and can be given by upperclass midshipmen in the chain of command or by a commissioned officer (the company officer for most midshipmen). Twice a year, midshipmen receive a written evaluation. Third-Class (3/C) and Fourth-Class (4/C) midshipmen (i.e. sophomores and freshmen) receive the same "Evaluation Report" that enlisted sailors--First-Class (1/C) Petty Officers and below--receive in the Navy (see Appendix I). 1/C and Second-Class (2/C) midshipmen (i.e. seniors and juniors) receive the same "Fitness Report" that chief petty officers (CPOs) and officers receive in the Navy (see Appendix J)(Commandant of Midshipmen, 2003).

The Navy Evaluation Report does not list "decision making" as a performance trait, nor is the term "decision making" used anywhere in the report. There are several areas in which decision making is inferred, however. A midshipman could be marked "below standards" under "Professional Knowledge," if he or she is "unable to apply knowledge to solve routine problems." To receive a satisfactory mark in "Personal Job Accomplishment/Initiative," a midshipman must "willingly accept responsibility" (see Appendix I), which has been identified as an important aspect of decision making in the literature (MCDP 1, 1997; MCDP 6, 1997; Schmitt, 1988; Wedemeyer, 1938) and is cited in the Graduate Attributes of the Naval Academy's Strategic Plan (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004).

The Navy Fitness Report does not list "decision making" as a performance trait either. As in the Evaluation Report, any reference to decision making in the Fitness Report is inferred. For example, to receive the highest rating for "Professional Expertise," a midshipman must be "sought after to solve difficult problems" (see Appendix J). Problem solving and decision making are not one and the same, however. Therefore, it can be said that midshipmen are not explicitly evaluated on their ability to make decisions, in spite of the stated and perceived importance of decision making by all involved (i.e. senior leaders, company officers, and midshipmen).

By contrast, the Marine Corps Fitness Report--used for enlisted Marines, sergeant and above, and officers--*does* explicitly evaluate decision making. Under

Section G, "Intellect and Wisdom," there is a trait titled, "Decision-Making Ability." It is described as:

Visible and timely problem solution. Contributing elements are judgment and decisiveness. Decisions reflect the balance between an optimal solution and a satisfactory, workable solution that generates tempo. Decisions are made within the context of the commander's established intent and the goal of mission accomplishment. Anticipation, mental agility, intuition, and success are inherent.

To receive a satisfactory mark, a Marine must "make sound decisions leading to mission accomplishment, actively collect and evaluate information and weigh alternatives to achieve timely results, confidently approach problems, and accept responsibility for outcomes" (see Appendix K).

In the case of decision making, the Marine Corps fitness report provides a good example of ends and means that contribute to one another. The Marine Corps's preeminent doctrinal publication, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1 (MCDP 1): Warfighting* (1997), asserts that Marines must be decision makers. To support its warfighting philosophy, the Marine Corps requires timeliness, decisiveness, "good enough" solutions, tempo, mission accomplishment, intuition, confidence, and acceptance of responsibility (MCDP 1, 1997). That is the desired endstate. As a means of achieving that endstate, Marines are evaluated on exactly these traits, all of which are encompassed under "decision-making ability" on the Marine Corps fitness report (see Appendix K).

The Navy reports do not accomplish the same thing for the Naval Academy. The Naval Academy has stated the desired endstate, capable decision makers (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004), but one of the key means--the Naval Academy's evaluation system--does not contribute to this endstate. Just as decision-making ability is inferred in the Navy's evaluation system, so is the development of decision-making skills in midshipmen. It is an implicit process, one left largely to chance. As Colonel Allen put it:

It "happens." It is not an explicit outcome. We are teaching character development, ethics, and leadership, but the outcome is not an explicit analysis of decisions, the outcome does not create an inherent, intentional requirement to make decisions, with the obligatory after-action requirement to provide feedback (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003).

#### **D. HOW ARE MIDSHIPMEN TAUGHT DECISION MAKING?**

With the importance of decision making having been both articulated and understood, it is time to look at where and how decision making is actually taught at the Naval Academy. The challenge is determining what the Naval Academy wants midshipmen to know about decision making, and to what extent that instruction should be explicit or implicit. The Naval Academy's Division of Professional Development (ProDev) is primarily responsible for decision-making instruction and training, and this section examines what it teaches and how. Additionally, the work of the USNA Leadership Task Force will be reviewed to identify how its findings might relate to decision making. Lastly, an example of decision-making training outside of ProDev, the Sexual Assault and Victim Intervention (SAVI) Program, will be addressed.

##### **1. The Challenge**

Naval Academy graduates go on to serve in a wide range of assignments that include diverse responsibilities and expectations. This makes it exceedingly difficult for the Naval Academy to determine what its graduates need to know about decision making. A brief summary of these post-commissioning opportunities will make this point clear.

Naval Academy graduates are commissioned either as ensigns in the Navy or second lieutenants in the Marine Corps. All physically qualified graduates are commissioned into the unrestricted line of the Navy or Marine Corps (USNA Catalog, 2003). In the last ten years, these unrestricted line officers, at whom the curriculum is directed, have comprised over 93% of graduating classes (L. Mallory, personal communication, January 29, 2004). The rest go into restricted line and staff corps specialties such as intelligence, medicine, and supply (USNA Catalog, 2003).

Some graduates specialize in surface warfare, with assignments on ships ranging from minesweepers to guided missile cruisers. A new surface warfare ensign typically leads 12 to 50 enlisted sailors and directs a portion of the ship's equipment and operations. Other graduates enter the submarine service, with duty in nuclear-powered attack and ballistic missile submarines. A submarine junior officer leads 10 to 20 men and has responsibilities in vital areas of engineering, weapons, or communications. Graduates who enter naval aviation fly a variety of aircraft from helicopters and shore-based patrol planes to supersonic, aircraft carrier-based jet fighters; naval flight officers

serve as bombardiers, navigators, radar and electronic intercept officers and antisubmarine warfare systems specialists. A small number of graduates enter Special Operations (Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Mine Countermeasures, Operational Diving and Salvage, and Explosive Ordnance Management) or Special Warfare [Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) units]. Those graduates who enter the Marine Corps may be platoon commanders in infantry, armor, and artillery units on the ground or serve in Marine Air (USNA Catalog, 2003). These potential assignments span a wide range of decision-making responsibilities and latitude and make it plain to see what a challenge it is for the Naval Academy to determine what its graduates should know about decision making.

## **2. Explicit versus Implicit**

Not only must it be determined what graduates need to know about decision making, that is, *what* should be taught, but also *how* it should be taught. This goes back to what was discussed previously: is it sufficient for midshipmen to implicitly learn some decision making along the way during four years at the Naval Academy, or will that result in an officer who is inadequately prepared for the decision-making challenges he or she will face as a junior officer? And if an implicit proficiency gained over the course of one's service was sufficient in the past, will it necessarily continue to be so in the present and future?

Regardless of service community, the Global War on Terror is fundamentally different than the Cold War, and junior officers are called upon to make decisions that will not only affect the lives of those they lead, but could also have strategic effect on policy. The Tactical Action Officer (TAO) on a Naval vessel with a small craft--potentially laden with explosives--approaching at a high rate of speed faces the same critical, split-second requirement for a decision as does the pilot who identifies non-combatants on a high-value target or the platoon commander who is taking fire from a mosque or a hospital. Does not the Naval Academy have an obligation to, as Colonel Allen put it, not only provide midshipmen with a pool of knowledge, but also--through repeated decision-making experiences--give them the ability to interrogate that knowledge when confronted with a decision (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003)? The following section will demonstrate how little explicit decision-making instruction and training take place at the Naval Academy.

### **3. Professional Development Continuum**

The Division of Professional Development's mission is to prepare midshipmen to be professional officers to serve in the Navy or Marine Corps (USNA Division of Professional Development, 2004). In a command brief given June 11, 2003, ProDev presented its mantra as "preparing midshipmen to excel in the Fleet" (USNA Division of Professional Development, 2003). It accomplishes this through two complementary means. The first is by providing academic instruction through the Department of Leadership, Ethics, and Law (LEL) and the Department of Seamanship and Navigation. The second is by giving midshipmen experiential leadership opportunities through the Department of Professional Programs (USNA Division of Professional Development, 2004). Both areas were examined for decision-making instruction and opportunities.

#### ***a) Academic Instruction***

To find out what midshipmen are taught about decision making in the classroom, the author spoke with the officer responsible for all Leadership instruction in LEL. This officer explained the continuum of Leadership instruction midshipmen receive during their four years at the Naval Academy. She also gave the author copies of the Leadership textbooks midshipmen use, Leadership course descriptions, and lesson plans, all of which were examined in detail.

In each of their four years, midshipmen have a class in leadership, ethics, or law. Their first year, they have NL112 Leadership and Human Behavior. Of 29 class sessions, half of one session is devoted to decision making. In the chapter, "How We Make Choices--The Way the Mind Thinks," decision making is presented along with problem solving. They are not presented as one in the same; rather, "although every problem-solving process involves a decision (deciding on a solution), not all decisions involve a problem" (Deputy & Waesche, 2003, p.43). This lesson presents a list of five steps for thinking critically through a complex decision. There is no mention at all of the different decision-making models (analytical and intuitive), of the types of decisions with which military leaders are typically faced, or of the leader's decision-making obligations.

In the next three years, midshipmen receive an ethics class (NE203 Moral Reasoning for Naval Leaders), another leadership class (NL302 Leadership: Theory and Application), and a law class (NL400 Law for the Junior Officer). None of these classes

includes any explicit instruction on decision making. In the course of four years at the Naval Academy, midshipmen receive one half of one class period of instruction on decision making, which equates to about 25 minutes.

#### ***b) Experiential Learning***

Summer training programs are administered through the Department of Professional Programs. The purpose of these programs is to provide midshipmen with leadership (to include decision-making) opportunities and experiences beyond the classroom and Bancroft Hall. The summer training covers a 12-week period. Each midshipman is required to participate in at least six weeks of training, though most participate in at least eight. Midshipmen are assigned to a cruise block that is 3-4 weeks long, then may choose from a number of elective blocks that range from 3-5 weeks (USNA Division of Professional Development, 2003).

The summer training opportunities are broken down by class year. The cruise blocks range from YP cruises for third-class (3/C) midshipmen to surface, aviation, and submarine cruises for upperclass. Leadership opportunities in the elective blocks include billets as squad leaders for rising high school seniors attending Summer Seminar, off-shore sailing, and training cadres for the Naval Academy Primary School and for Plebe Summer.

Each of the professional programs is designed to give midshipmen exposure to the Fleet and learn more about the opportunities that exist for them in different service communities. The nature of the training progresses from trainee/follower to trainer/leader as the midshipmen move up in class. The summer training program is intended to give midshipmen opportunities that will augment the training and education they receive during the academic year at the Naval Academy. With regard to decision making, however, there are no stated goals or objectives to be achieved. Much like their professional development at the Naval Academy during the academic year, any decision-making development midshipmen receive during summer training is implied and at times even incidental.

#### **4. USNA Leadership Task Force**

Colonel Allen and Captain Leidig both talked about the need to achieve a greater synthesis of the different programs and efforts that contribute to midshipmen's

professional development. Each recognizes the great things that are done everyday at the Naval Academy, but also believes that improvements can and must be made. One significant initiative to help in this is the work of the current Leadership Task Force.

The Leadership Task Force is a comprehensive effort undertaken to explore every aspect of a midshipman's experience at the Naval Academy and then identify as many leadership opportunities as possible. The first step will be to identify and categorize these leadership opportunities, and then the task force will attempt to qualify each. Based on metrics to be established, each leadership opportunity identified will be qualified as an extensive, moderate, or limited opportunity for midshipmen to lead. The intent is to assist company officers and others involved in midshipmen's professional development to better guide midshipmen toward leadership opportunities from which the officer believes a particular midshipman can most benefit (J.J. Thomas, personal communication, February 19, 2004). The scope of the task force is leadership, so the results will not be limited to decision-making opportunities. However, if one accepts Colonel Allen's view that leadership and decision making are inseparable, then the findings of the task force will do much to identify and qualify decision-making opportunities for midshipmen.

### **5. SAVI Training**

Decision-making training for midshipmen should not be limited to tactics. Captain Leidig considers decision making to be a critical building block for his two focal points, honor and leadership (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004). Colonel Allen said that leaders' decisions must rest upon their moral foundations. He believes time should be spent at the Naval Academy "to build the habit for decision making that is character-based." Decision-making training at the Naval Academy should create the intellectual and moral processes to facilitate this character-based decision making (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003). One way the Naval Academy works toward this is through the Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) Program.

The SAVI Program ties together decision making, leadership, honor, character, and duty. The Naval Academy has an officer assigned as the SAVI Program Director. This officer gives briefs that carry midshipmen through notional scenarios that result in sexual assault. The goals of these briefs are to impress upon midshipmen that sexual

assault is a leadership issue and to give them some tools to help prevent it. One of the main themes of the program is that there are patterns of behavior that can be recognized leading up to a sexual assault. Just as in tactical decision making, one important way to make people better decision makers is to increase the number of patterns they can recognize (Allen, 1993; Klein, 2003; MCDP 1-3, 1997; Schmitt, 1995). This will help them more quickly and accurately assess a situation and make an effective decision in a timely manner.

Another important way that the SAVI Program develops decision making in midshipmen is that it does not simply focus on the decision made. Instead, in the SAVI training midshipmen receive, the entire decision-making process is analyzed (Klein, 2003). Questions are asked like, “What cues/indicators were missed?” and, “Why was this form of behavior interpreted the way it was?” The facilitator goes back and walks midshipmen through the process step-by-step, pointing out flaws in the decisions made along the way. The SAVI Program tries to give midshipmen the tools they will need to help them make the right decisions if faced with these situations. The decisions midshipmen are faced with regarding sexual assault may not be tactical, but they are rooted in character, honor, and leadership, all of which are traits upon which the Naval Academy places paramount importance (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004; J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003; C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

#### **E. DECISION-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MIDSHIPMEN**

The Naval Academy provides a wide range of leadership opportunities for midshipmen. To learn how these leadership opportunities translate to decision-making opportunities, company officers and midshipmen were asked a number of questions about the types of decisions midshipmen typically make. They were also asked whether or not they believe decision-making opportunities for midshipmen are adequate, and they gave recommendations on how to increase midshipmen’s decision-making opportunities.

##### **1. Wide-Ranging Leadership Opportunities**

By design, opportunities abound at the Naval Academy for midshipmen to study, observe, and practice leadership. Many call it a “leadership laboratory” (R. Thayer, personal communication, March 30, 2004). The very nature of the Brigade of Midshipmen and the leadership billets that midshipmen rotate through serve the purpose

of giving them the opportunity for practical application of the leadership skills, techniques, and theories they learn. But leadership opportunities extend far beyond billets in the brigade.

Athletics provide leadership opportunities for young men and women at colleges and universities across the country, and the Naval Academy is no exception. The difference, however, is that the leadership demonstrated on Naval Academy athletic teams is done within the context of the Naval Academy's mission, to develop midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004). Another difference is participation in some level of athletics (i.e. varsity, club, or intramural) is compulsory for all midshipmen, which not only contributes to physical fitness but also creates many leadership positions outside the brigade.

Another area of leadership opportunities for midshipmen is Extracurricular Activities (e.g. Debate Team, Silent Drill Team, and others), or ECAs. Like Club Sports, ECAs have a minimal support structure. They are largely run by club and ECA officers, which are midshipmen. Without the support such as the Naval Academy Athletic Association provides for varsity sports, the midshipmen officers of these clubs and ECAs are much more involved in matters such as scheduling, travel, budgets, and so forth, than their varsity-athlete counterparts.

Leadership opportunities during the academic year--within the Brigade of Midshipmen, athletics, and ECAs--are augmented during the summer by ProDev's Professional Programs, commonly known as Summer Training. All of these activities in and out of Bancroft Hall provide midshipmen with an abundance of opportunities to practice leadership throughout the year. But just as the Leadership Task Force is attempting to qualify leadership opportunities, this research sought to learn more about the types of decisions midshipmen are making in the "leadership laboratory" that is the Naval Academy.

## **2. What Kind of Decisions Should Midshipmen be Making?**

This the question Captain Leidig asked when discussing teaching decision making to midshipmen (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004). For the

purpose of providing company officers and midshipmen a context for their responses, the author developed an operational definition of decision making for the survey and focus groups. Company officers and midshipmen described the types of decisions the latter typically make. These were compared with the types of decisions officers typically make, and then it was asked whether or not midshipmen are being adequately prepared to make such decisions. The USNA Honor System receives special attention here because it stands out among midshipmen's decision-making opportunities.

***a) Operational Definition of Decision Making***

Midshipmen make decisions every day. Not all decisions are equal, however, particularly in regard to whether or not a particular decision contributes to a midshipman's professional development. For the purposes of this research, company officers and midshipmen were provided with the following definition of decision making:

Decision making is the process of identifying essential factors, developing options, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each, and selecting a solution. For the purposes of this survey, decision making is confined to the performance of one's leadership responsibilities, military or otherwise (see Appendices D & E).

The first half of this definition provides a classic definition of the analytical decision making (Klein, 2003; Schmitt, 1995). This definition of decision making was used because it is what is commonly understood when one thinks of decision making. It was not the author's intent to involve the company officers and midshipmen in a debate over the pros and cons of analytical and intuitive decision making. The second half of the definition defines the scope of the type of decision making this research addresses--"leadership decisions"--as defined in Chapter II.

***b) Types of Decisions Midshipmen Make***

Company officers and midshipmen were asked what type of decisions midshipmen get to make. Selected responses from company officers can be found in Appendix L, and from midshipmen in Appendix M. A summary of their responses follows.

Company officers believe that most decisions midshipmen get to make are personal decisions (i.e. decisions that only affect themselves). Some said that strippers were an exception to this because their decisions could affect the unit they command.

This is not the case for all stripers, however; decision-making opportunities vary from company to company, and for some stripers, any "decision" that will affect the unit is really just a recommendation to an officer who has to concur before the decision can be executed. Midshipmen's entire lives are strictly governed by pervasive regulations, and so they make personal decisions about whether or not to follow those regulations, say the company officers.

As expected, midshipmen's responses varied somewhat depending on their category (i.e. striper, athlete, or neither). Stripers have to make a lot of decisions about priorities; usually these concern competing demands made on their time by their leadership billets and by academics. They agree that decision-making latitude varies from company to company, but believe they generally operate within clearly demarcated and stringently constraining boundaries. Their perception is that they are "guided" or assisted in making the "right" decisions by officers who have decided in their minds what is the right decision.

One striper who was a staff officer on a regimental staff expressed his opinion that not only are the midshipmen severely restricted in the decisions they can make,

(B)ut even the company officers don't have the ability to make decisions. When it comes right down to it, everything has to be blessed by the signature of the Commandant, and from there down I see a box has been set, and then there's no leeway. You can't go outside that box without permission from the Commandant. Even the battalion officers are kind of tied up by the fact that they need to get approval from the Commandant to do things (see Appendix M).

Captain Leidig addressed his concern that so much of the decision-making authority at the Naval Academy lay with the officers, and he expressed a desire to push this down to midshipmen wherever appropriate and possible (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

It should be noted that the focus groups were conducted less than three months after Captain Leidig assumed his duties as Commandant, and during that time much of the senior leadership's attention and efforts dealt with recovering from the devastating damage Hurricane Isabel inflicted on the Naval Academy. Therefore it

cannot be determined whether the opinion expressed by this midshipman would change over time as a result of Captain Leidig's desire to make changes in this area, or if the very nature of the structure and mission of the Naval Academy will always result in some midshipmen who think they do not have enough decision-making authority.

Athletes, too, have to make decisions about priorities. Just as academics compete with time for strippers to devote to their leadership billets, so do academics compete with the time midshipmen can devote to their sport. At different times during the course of their time at the Naval Academy, many athletes face the decision whether or not to continue with their sport due to so many other demands on their time. Lastly, athletes have to decide the extent to which they want to involve themselves in the brigade since they are given a number of excusals that can often result in very limited participation in the daily routine of non-varsity athlete midshipmen.

The third category of midshipmen, those who are neither strippers nor varsity athletes, does not think the first-class midshipmen get much chance to lead or decide. They think the "right" answer is predetermined by officers. They believe that company officers micromanage, and that everything is so structured that there is little room for creative leadership. However, one midshipman who had spent a lot of time with the Command Seamanship & Navigation Training Squadron (CSNTS) as a boat skipper experienced a much different environment:

I felt like...there were real decisions that affected (others), like we are crossing a channel and there's this shipping bearing down on us, strong winds, almost gale force, lightning all around, it's dark, you can't see the buoys, you are trying not to hit anything...and I had officers on board...who would just quietly watch me. I've got a youngster crew that's scared, so I have to calm them down and keep the ship straight. So I think on that cruise there was a lot of decision making, where there were actually consequences, where people could get hurt and bad things could happen (see Appendix M).

This midshipman is neither a stripper nor a varsity athlete, yet his experiences as a CSNTS skipper gave him the opportunity to lead and make important decisions that affect others. This example demonstrates the fact that there are many decision-making opportunities for midshipmen at the Naval Academy, and the best ones are not always necessarily found in the most obvious places (e.g. leadership billets in the

brigade). It also helps to explain why the Superintendent is so interested in launching a "sailing renaissance" at the Naval Academy, because he strongly believes that sailing is an excellent means for midshipmen to learn and practice leadership and--as this example shows--decision-making (A.J. Athens personal communication, March 15, 2004).

### ***c) Types of Decisions Officers Make***

In conjunction with learning what kinds of decisions midshipmen typically make, the author wanted to compare these with the decisions they can expect to face as officers. Colonel Athens raised the notion of the "gut-wrenching decision" (A.J. Athens, personal communication, November 25, 2003), which the author defined as "a decision that causes a person great anguish and is very difficult to make because the costs of the decision will be very significant for those affected" (see Appendix E). Junior officers frequently have to make such decisions in the performance of their duties, be it a second lieutenant sending a squad of Marines to near-certain death against a machinegun bunker or an ensign not recommending a petty officer first class for promotion, essentially ending that sailor's Navy career.

As the Commandant of Midshipmen, Colonel Allen often found in conducting Honor or Conduct adjudications that midshipmen had never had to make any hard decisions (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003). Captain Leidig's experience has been similar. He has had numerous midshipmen stand in front of him after committing an Honor offense and tell him, "I really thought I was an honorable person...and I found myself in this really tough situation and I crumbled. I cracked. And I was embarrassed that I crumbled, and I don't know why I did" (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

To learn more about tough decisions midshipmen have to make, the author asked midshipmen how often, if ever, they have had to make "gut-wrenching" decisions related to their leadership positions, and which ones they might have faced. The strippers generally agreed that they do not make such decisions in the performance of their duties because, as one midshipman company commander put it, "the big stuff just flies right over us" (see Appendix N). In other words, midshipmen believe that any decisions of consequence are "taken away" from them. From the midshipmen's responses, three other themes arose.

### i) Which Comes First, Honor or Loyalty?

"Don't bilge a shipmate." Anyone who has had any contact with the Naval Academy is familiar with this mantra. For midshipmen, it runs much deeper than a mere slogan--it embodies the principles of teamwork and loyalty that are so important in their profession of arms. In its purest form, "Don't bilge a shipmate" means that midshipmen will not try to get ahead or make themselves look good in the eyes of their seniors at the expense of another midshipman. In practical terms, it can cause midshipmen great personal anguish and confusion as they simultaneously attempt to uphold the Naval Academy's Honor Concept, which states in part, "Midshipmen are persons of integrity: They stand for that which is right. They tell the truth and ensure that the full truth is known. They do not lie" (USNA Character Development, 2004).

As midshipmen wrestle with the internal conflict between honor and loyalty, they find themselves faced with difficult, sometimes what they consider to be gut-wrenching, decisions. As one midshipman put it,

If you witness an Honor offense that is done by a friend of yours...what do you do? I mean, obviously, there is the "letter of the law"--what you *should* do--versus not bilging a shipmate, which is pounded into your head from day one (see Appendix N).

Other midshipmen mentioned how they struggle with "telling the whole truth," for example implicating a classmate after one has been caught in an offense. While these decisions seldom occur under positive circumstances, they are difficult decisions nonetheless, and in a sense contribute to a midshipman's preparation for the tough decisions he or she will face as an officer.

### ii) Accountability and Punishment

Holding peers accountable for their transgressions is another area in which midshipmen can experience internal anguish over decisions that must be made. Some company officers allow their midshipman company commanders to assign punishments for minor offenses. One such company commander said,

As company commander...I've gotten to handle a lot of the minor offenses, and have (had) to pay a high price with (my) peers...that is the closest I've ever come to anything I would even remotely consider to be gut-

wrenching, to look someone in the eye and have to decide what that punishment is (see Appendix N).

In addition to stripers, other midshipmen have had to make difficult decisions while standing duty. Midshipmen on watch have to deal with fellow midshipmen who return to Bancroft Hall drunk and unfit for duty (and sometimes underage), or after curfew, and the midshipman on watch has to decide whether or not to "do the right thing" and hold a shipmate accountable, knowing that if they do, the offender will be punished for his or her transgression.

### iii) The Example are Midshipmen Shown

The Naval Academy wants midshipmen to be able to look to the officers for the example of what to do and how to act in every way. In the case of making difficult decisions, midshipmen are not encouraged by what they see in many of the officers around them. One midshipman battalion commander said,

I've stood watch with officers who will not make a decision on their own, but will execute the "letter of the law" for every specific decision, if you can call it a decision...They are not making a decision, they are an automaton, simply looking up regulations. There's no such thing as the "spirit of the law." I've had them say..."I don't want to do this, but that's the regulation--I have to," and to me, that's just, number one, it's the most disgusting form of leadership I've ever seen, and number two, that's what happens when you are not taught what responsibility is and what decision making is" (see Appendix N).

This midshipman and others mentioned what they perceive to be a lack of a "gray area," where everything is either black or white. The result, as they see it, is that officers and midshipmen alike are not trusted to make decisions, but rather are expected to follow the regulations exactly as written. This apparent attempt to reduce to decisions to a series of procedures is not unique to the Naval Academy. Many organizations take refuge in procedures. Supervisors play it safe by reducing tasks to procedures. This makes it easier for new workers to carry out their responsibilities. It also supports accountability by letting managers verify if the procedures are followed (Klein, 2003). Unfortunately, it also inhibits judgment and decision making, and as seen by the midshipmen's responses, erodes their confidence in their senior leadership.

***d) Are Midshipmen Making the Right Kind of Decisions?***

The Naval Academy's senior leadership, company officers, and midshipmen agree on the type of decisions officers must be able to make. There is much less agreement, however, on whether or not the Naval Academy is adequately preparing midshipmen to make these types of decisions. This is caused in part by the divergent expectations the different services and communities have concerning a junior officer's responsibilities and his or her ability to make decisions.

***i. Time Pressure and Uncertainty***

Officers not only frequently have to make gut-wrenching decisions, but--particularly in combat or real-world operations--must make decisions quickly and with limited information (Allen, 1993; Athens, 1992; Clausewitz, 1984; Klein, 2003; MCDP 1, 1997; Schmitt, 1988). Effective training for tactical decision making includes time pressure, uncertainty, fog, and friction (A.J. Athens, personal communication, July 29, 2003). And in light of these challenging conditions, commanders are expected to "make perfect decisions with imperfect information" (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

Company officers and midshipmen were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "An officer must be able to make decisions under time pressure and uncertainty" (see Appendices D & E). Figure 4 shows nearly unanimous agreement among both company officers and midshipmen. Of the company officers, 27 of 30 (90%) strongly agreed and 2 more agreed, meaning 96.7% either agreed or strongly agreed. Of the midshipmen asked, 34 of 36 (94.4%) strongly agreed and 1 other agreed, for a total of 97.7% who either agreed or strongly agreed (see Figure 4). Selected comments from the company officers can be found in Appendix O.

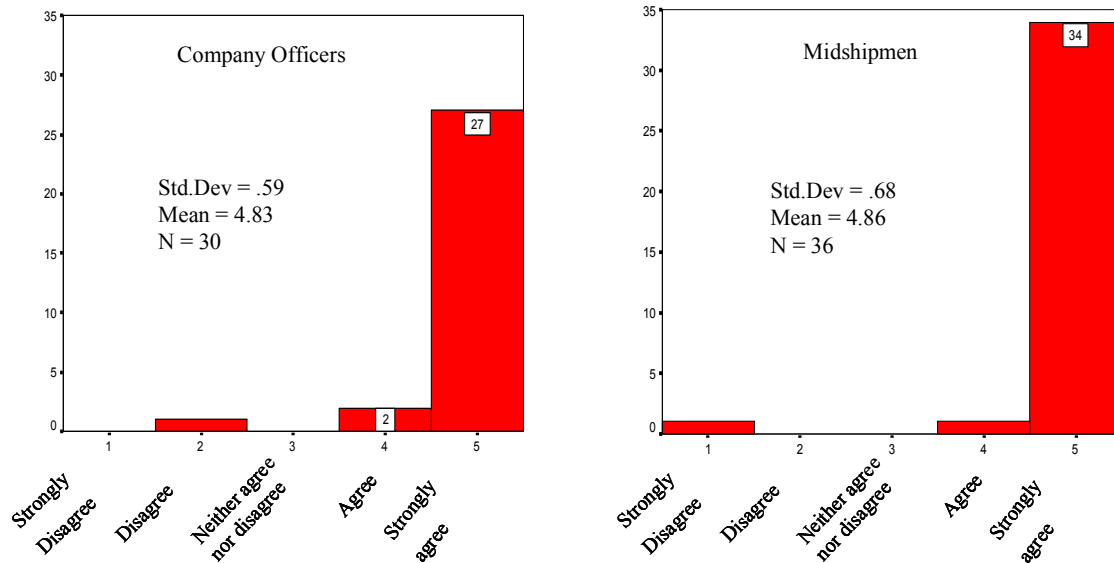


Figure 4. Agreement Ratings That Officers Must be Able to Make Decisions Under Time Pressure and Uncertainty

#### ii. Are Midshipmen Prepared?

Although all involved can agree on the types of decisions midshipmen *will have to make* once they are commissioned as officers, there is less agreement on whether or not the Naval Academy is adequately preparing midshipmen to *be able to make* such decisions. When asked if they agreed that "the types of decisions midshipmen make prepare them for the types of decisions they will make as officers," only 12 of 30 company officers (40%) agreed or strongly agreed while 14 of 30 (46.7%) disagreed or strongly disagreed (see Figure 5).

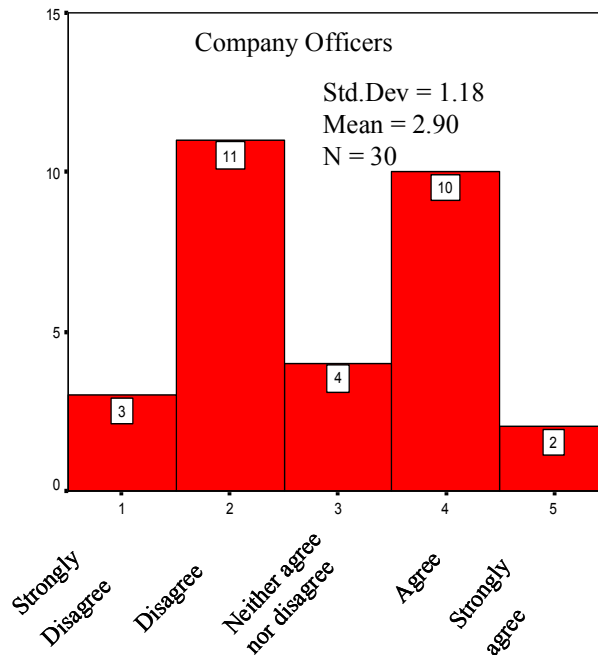


Figure 5. Agreement Ratings That The Types of Decisions Midshipmen Make Prepare Them for The Types of Decisions They Will Make as Officers

Of the company officers who were satisfied with the decision-making preparation midshipmen receive, several noted that any decisions midshipmen make--trivial, personal, gut-wrenching, or otherwise--will help them as officers. Many others, however, expressed concern that midshipmen do not make the connection between the ability to get the little things right now and being able to get the big things right later. More than one company officer said they battle the belief some midshipmen have that they can go through their time at the Naval Academy as they please, and then magically be able to "flip the switch" and be able to lead once they get commissioned (see Appendix P).

A number of company officers expressed the opinion that the Naval Academy "spoon feeds" midshipmen, and does not allow them to make any decisions of consequence. One company officer said,

We don't even allow them to make decisions about paying for a haircut or taking out the trash, much less anything that is truly important. I think graduation is a real eye opener for the kind of...decisions they will have to make (see Appendix P).

Just as midshipmen expressed their perception that all the important decisions are taken away from them (see Appendix N), several company officers echoed the same opinion. As one company officer put it, "Many decisions that require significant thought are often made FOR midshipmen instead of BY midshipmen" (see Appendix O).

Another trend that appeared in the company officers' responses is that a lack of tolerance for mistakes eliminates potential quality decision-making opportunities for midshipmen. Instead of midshipmen being allowed to make mistakes and learn from them, leaders at the Naval Academy "are so concerned with getting everything right the first time that company officers just tend to pass on the word about what should be done" (see Appendix P). Or put another way, "We don't give them enough leeway to screw-up and learn from their mistakes. USNA is a zero tolerance command in every aspect of their lives" (see Appendix P). Additional company officer comments can be found in Appendix P.

### iii. Expectations of a Junior Officer

The split among the company officers over how well midshipmen are being prepared for their decision-making responsibilities can be explained in part by differences in what is expected of junior officers (and in this case, Naval Academy graduates). At one level, this difference exists between services. One indicator is the way the Navy and Marine Corps evaluate performance. As previously addressed, the Marine Corps explicitly evaluates decision making and the Navy does not (see Appendices I, J, & K). Another indicator is what can--and cannot--be found in each service's professional journal.

In the *Marine Corps Gazette*, much like the U.S. Army's *Military Review*, one can find numerous articles that discuss the importance of decision-making and ways to train decision makers. There is no such discussion of decision making in the Naval Institute's *Proceedings*. Instead, one finds articles that discuss concepts like "Total Information Dominance" and "Network-Centric Warfare," where the focus is on technology instead on the human decision maker (Zimm, 1999). This is despite the fact that investigations into the 1988 mistaken-identity shootdown of an Iranian airbus by the *USS Vincennes* referred to human errors, mistakes, confusion, and distortions of

information made under the stress of combat (Gruner, 1990). Human factors like fear, tension, psychological fatigue, and the fog of war existed on the bridge of the *Vincennes* that day, and yet they receive scant attention by the Navy in training decision makers. The nature of this difference between the topics of discussion in the *Gazette* and *Proceedings* is largely due to the battlefield environments of decision makers in the Marine Corps--where a leader has much more autonomy--and the Navy, where decision making tends to be much more centralized. This distinction was acknowledged by both Commandants of Midshipmen interviewed and by a former editor of *Proceedings* (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003; C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004; J.A. Barber, personal communication, January 22, 2004).

At another level, this difference in decision-making autonomy and expectations exists within the Navy itself. An ensign on the bridge of a ship or a weapons officer on a nuclear submarine operate in very different decision-making environments than a Navy pilot or a SEAL platoon commander. All this goes back to the challenge the Naval Academy faces in trying to determine what its graduates need to know in terms of decision making (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004; A.J. Athens, personal communication, July 29, 2003). The imperative of the need to produce decisions makers, however, has been shown time and again in places like the port of Aden (October, 2000 terrorist attack on the *USS Cole*), the mountains of Afghanistan, and the urban streets of Iraq.

#### ***e) The USNA Honor System***

A number of midshipmen cited the Naval Academy's Honor System as the only genuine example of midshipmen making difficult decisions of potentially great consequence (see Appendix N). To gather more information about the Honor System, the author interviewed the Ethics Advisor to the Commandant of Midshipmen and the Honor Chair, who is the midshipman responsible for administering the Honor System. Some background of the Honor System is provided, as well as who participates in it and in what capacity, and how the process works.

##### **i. Background and Purpose**

The Honor Concept charges midshipmen to maintain the highest standards of personal integrity. The emphasis is placed on "doing what is right" rather

than simply not breaking the rules. An Honor Treatise, developed by a midshipman working group in 1994, is premised upon a "thou shalt" rather than a "thou shalt not" principle (USNA Character Development, 2004).

The Honor System is an administrative process that has no equivalent in the Fleet. The Commandant's Ethics Advisor calls the Honor System "the most important aspect of the Naval Academy." The midshipmen who administer it are given a great deal of independence, and this is by design. The intent of the instruction (USNA Instruction 1610.3F, 2001) is to empower midshipmen. According to the Commandant's Ethics Advisor, strippers might make decisions, but not the type of decisions midshipmen make in the Honor System; here, midshipmen "face dilemmas and grapple with moral decisions" (J. Modisette, personal communication, February 20, 2004).

#### ii. Midshipmen Own the Honor Concept

The Honor System is completely administered by midshipmen. The Brigade Honor Staff is headed by a first-class midshipman who is the Brigade Honor Chair. The Commandant's Ethics Advisor calls this midshipman "the most powerful, most independent midshipman decision maker" at the Naval Academy, because his decisions are allowed to stand (J. Modisette, personal communication, February 20, 2004). The Brigade Honor Chair is the single person who decides whether an Honor allegation--be it made by a midshipman or an officer--will be referred for the appropriate level of counseling or proceed to an Honor Board where a guilty finding could result in a midshipman's separation from the Naval Academy. The Brigade Honor Chair told the author that his billet is not one in which one "makes many friends." In the daily performance of his duties, however, he strives "to be morally consistent and do what is best for the brigade" (Brigade Honor Chair, personal communication, April 16, 2004).

On the occasions a Brigade Honor Board is convened, the board is comprised entirely of midshipmen. This board of midshipmen and no one else will decide whether or not a midshipman is guilty of the alleged Honor offense, no matter how senior the accuser or witnesses may be. The only other body at the Naval Academy that has similar authority are Academic Boards, but those are administered by the most

senior members of the Naval Academy leadership, to include the Superintendent, Commandant, and Academic Dean.

An Honor Board consists of 9 midshipmen, none of whom is junior to the accused. A computer program generates a random sample of 20 midshipmen to be screened to sit on each board. To be seated on the board, midshipmen must respond in the affirmative to 3 questions: Can they cast an unbiased vote in the case of the accused? Can they vote in light of the punishment the accused may receive (i.e. separation)? And, do they have faith in the Honor System?

### iii. The Process

In the course of this research, the author had the opportunity to observe an Honor Board. As this Honor Board convened, the Honor Chair directed the board members that their task was to conduct a professional, non-adversarial, unbiased board. He reminded them to separate their emotions from their decisions. Throughout the board--which lasted more than seven hours--the Honor Chair could challenge questions, and he continually had to make decisions about what to allow and not allow to be introduced. Each of these decisions had potentially profound impact on the outcome of the board, and all eyes in the room repeatedly found their way to the Honor Chair as he had to make one difficult decision after another, with all present intensely aware of the magnitude of each decision that weighed on the Honor Chair and him alone. The Honor Chair's performance was one that demanded strength of character and moral endurance. Without question, this is one midshipman whose experiences at the Naval Academy will have uniquely prepared him for the decision-making responsibilities he will face as a commissioned officer.

The Honor Chair is not the only one faced with difficult decisions in the Honor System, however. At the end of the proceedings, the nine members of the board cast a secret, written vote. A supermajority (i.e. at least six votes) is necessary for a finding of "guilty." In casting their votes, each of these nine midshipmen is acutely aware of the potential consequences of a guilty finding, and yet each is equally aware of their obligation to uphold the Honor Concept. If the midshipmen on an Honor Board find the accused not guilty, no officer at the Naval Academy can overturn their decision. If

found guilty, then the accused reports to the Commandant of Midshipmen for adjudication, where--in the process of assigning punishment--the Commandant very much focuses on the flaws in the decision-making process of the accused that resulted in an Honor offense (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004).

### **3. Are These Opportunities Adequate?**

Haven taken an in-depth look at the types of decisions midshipmen typically get to make at the Naval Academy, the next question to be answered is whether or not this will produce the desired result: capable decision makers. Company officers and midshipmen were asked whether or not they believe midshipmen have adequate opportunities to make decisions. As for results, the midshipmen were asked if they believe their decision-making skills have improved while at the Naval Academy, and then--along with the company officers--they were asked if they think midshipmen leave the Naval Academy adequately prepared to be effective decision-makers as officers.

#### ***a) Do Midshipmen Have Adequate Opportunities for Decision Making?***

Company officers and midshipmen were both asked this question about decision-making opportunities. The company officers were basically split, whereas the midshipmen were of one voice--regardless of category--and it was a strong voice at that. Selected responses from company officers can be found in Appendix Q, and from midshipmen in Appendix R. On a second question--whether or not the Naval Academy devotes adequate time and resources to decision-making development, the company officers and midshipmen answered in relatively the same manner.

##### **i. Are the Opportunities There?**

The issue for the company officers was whether micromanagement was a legitimate inhibitor for midshipmen's decision-making opportunities or merely a smoke-screen behind which midshipmen readily hid so they would not have to put in the effort necessary to seize decision-making opportunities. One company officer said that "Mid Regs (are) too huge to possibly know and enforce. Instead of leadership, there is a cookbook approach to how the brigade strippers run things...The stripper duties are mapped out to be excessively rigid." But another countered with, "Much of their life is structured, however, midshipmen have incredibly wide latitude in making decisions. They usually

forego the opportunity to do so, however, out of laziness or their favorite: cynicism" (see Appendix Q).

Nearly all the company officers spoke to either micromanagement or the appropriate degree of presence of officers. One, however, pointed his finger in a different direction altogether. He said,

(The Naval Academy's) curriculum limits (decision-making) opportunities. At West Point, they bring all 4,000 cadets back from Christmas leave a week early and do what they call a military intercessional. They focus solely on solving combat scenarios (using computer simulations and field exercises)...We could do this, too. We could put YPs in the water and use the new facilities in Luce (Hall) to simulate "fleet battle problems" (see Appendix Q).

With the exception of one outlier who said he believes the decision-making opportunities are there to be taken, the midshipmen were all in agreement. They believe that they hear one thing from the officers--that they want midshipmen to make decisions and accept responsibility for those decisions--but see something entirely different. What they see is an environment in which every aspect of their lives is burdened with regulations and no one--not midshipmen, officers, or faculty--is willing to "step outside the box" no matter how much sense it would appear to make to do so. One midshipman was so frustrated by their inability to demonstrate initiative and common sense that he said, "You can put chimpanzees through the Naval Academy...and as long as you don't deviate too far from the standard, you really don't need to make any decisions, you just conform with what we've been presented" (see Appendix R).

In this environment, several strippers expressed a willingness to make decisions that exceed their authority because they believed it was the right decision to make. All of these instances involved granting a subordinate permission to take care of some personal business that otherwise would have had to wait until a time that, in their minds, would have caused undue inconvenience for their subordinates. These midshipmen acknowledged that they knew at the time of their decision that they were exceeding their established authority and were willing to accept the risk of "getting burned" in the name of "taking care of their people" (see Appendix R).

The issue of trust was raised again here. Midshipmen do not feel trusted by the officers to make decisions. Further, they believe the Naval Academy is a place where the leadership is afraid to allow mistakes. They believe company officers are too quick to step in and "shape" a midshipman's decision, preventing that midshipman from possibly making a mistake and learning from it. This is frustrating to many of the midshipmen because they believe one of the important purposes their time at the Naval Academy is supposed to serve is to provide them with an environment where they can try, fail, and learn without lives or other high stakes being on the line (see Appendix R).

In some ways, however, several midshipmen believe that all these constraints are actually helping them to form realistic expectations about what they will experience in the Fleet. One midshipman said,

I think we have ample opportunity to make... decisions every day, within (a) created structure. And I think that also reflects the Fleet, because as we move out in the Fleet as junior officers, we are going to be making decisions within a confining box that has been set up by our superiors. And so in that sense, I think that this place really does prepare (us) to make decisions (see Appendix R).

Other midshipmen talked about the limited decision-making opportunities for junior officers they witnessed while on summer training cruises.

ii. Does the Naval Academy Devote Enough Time and Resources to Decision Making?

Figure 6 represents the extent to which company officers and midshipmen agree that the Naval Academy devotes enough time and resources to decision making. Although 14 of 36 midshipmen (41.7%) disagreed, nearly 20% (7 of 36, or 19.5%) agreed or strongly agreed. This latter number was somewhat of a surprise, based on the overwhelmingly negative responses from the midshipmen on the previous question.

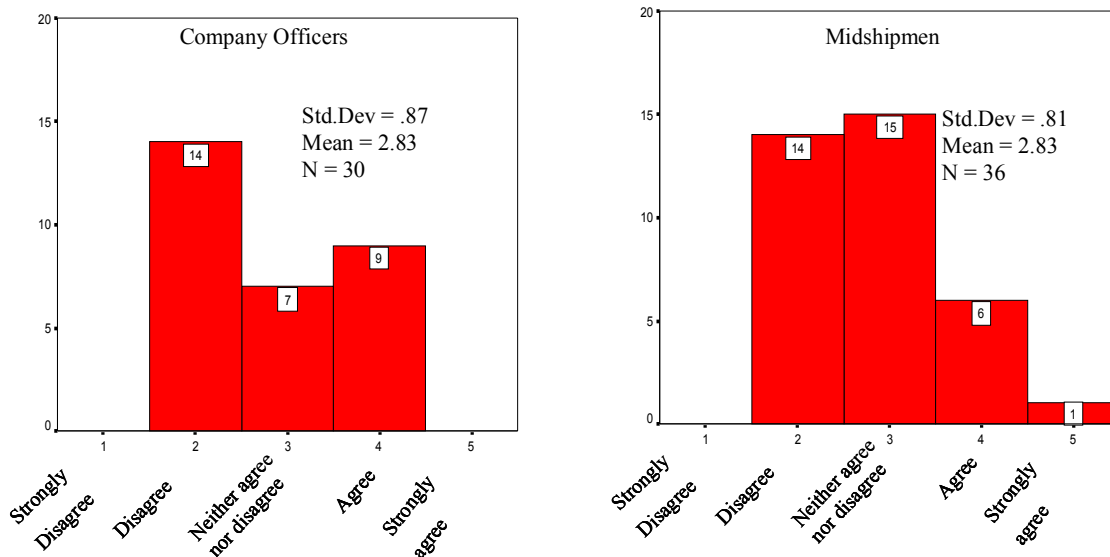


Figure 6. Agreement Ratings That Sufficient Time and Resources are Devoted to Developing Decision-Making Skills in Midshipmen at the Naval Academy

Just as they were split on the previous question, company officers could not form a consensus on this statement either. Nearly half (14 of 30, or 46.7%) disagreed, but 9 of 30 (30%) agreed. Selected comments by the company officers on this statement can be found in Appendix S. Among these, some observed that training and education at the Naval Academy usually stops short of discussing decision making, just as Captain Leidig cited in his example of the rote "man overboard" drills conducted by midshipmen on the YPs (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004). Another company officer noted the decision-making analysis that went on in SAVI training, but pointed out that sexual assault was but one of many areas in which midshipmen need decision-making training (see Appendix S).

With risk comes opportunity. Willingness to accept risk is an element of the moral courage necessary for command. Military leaders must have the moral courage to make bold decisions and accept the necessary degree of risk (Schmitt, 1988). This willingness to accept risk to create decision-making opportunities for midshipmen largely seems to have been absent at the Naval Academy, as expressed by one company officer:

Every day is filled with opportunities for midshipmen to actively make decisions...however, it must be used appropriately. As they are still developing, they will make novice mistakes. We must accept the risk associated with these mistakes and incorporate them into the decision-making process. If they are not given the opportunity to try, we are not developing their decision-making abilities. Instead, we are merely exercising their ability to follow orders within strict guidelines (see Appendix S).

***b) Do Midshipmen's Decision-Making Skills Improve While at the Naval Academy?***

The focus of the questions and discussion up to this point has been on whether or not the Naval Academy *does enough* to develop midshipmen as decision makers, and the data have been largely negative. In one sense, this is to be expected. After all, what is "good enough" when preparing combat leaders? This can actually be an encouraging sign that company officers and midshipmen are not satisfied that *enough* is being done to prepare midshipmen to make decisions that may carry great consequences with them.

To get a different perspective, midshipmen were asked the extent to which they agree that their decision-making skills have *improved* while they have been at the Naval Academy. Their responses are shown in Figure 7. At first glance, there would appear to be some dissonance between their responses to this statement compared to earlier responses: 26 of 36 midshipmen (72.3%) agree or strongly agree that their decision-making skills have improved, and only 3 of 36 (8.4%) disagree or strongly disagree (see Figure 7).

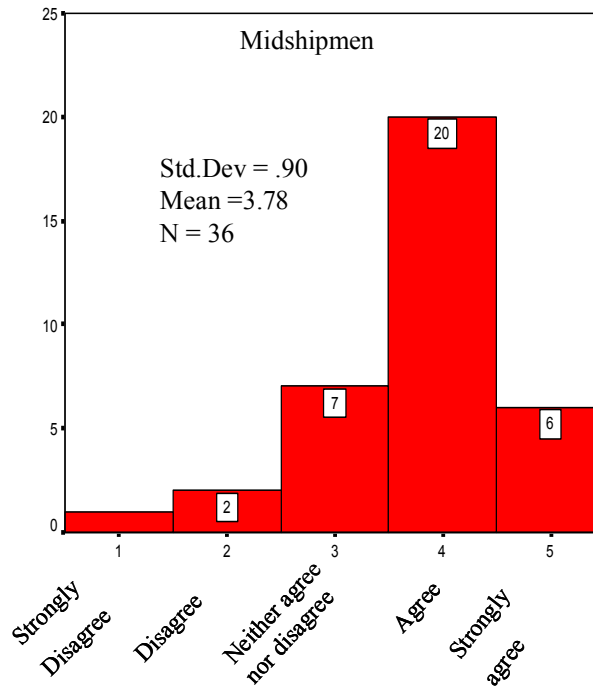


Figure 7. Agreement Ratings That Midshipmen's Decision-Making Skills Have Improved While at the Naval Academy

Why is there such a shift in the data? The answer may be that although midshipmen are not where they *want to be* in regard to decision-making skills, they have improved nonetheless from when they first arrived at the Naval Academy. Most midshipmen are not saying the Naval Academy has made them worse decision makers (although a couple did, along with a couple of company officers), but rather that the opportunity to become even better decision makers is far from being fully realized. Colonel Allen said the same thing. He thinks the Naval Academy is doing far better in many areas than it was when he was graduated 28 years ago, but he is equally convinced that--with the proper focus and application--the Naval Academy can bring its midshipmen to even greater levels of excellence (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003).

One last comment on these data. The midshipmen completed these Likert-scale questions at the beginning of the focus groups, before the discussion questions. It was during the ensuing discussion that the midshipmen really started to develop and express their thoughts on decision making, often times passionately. It might have been

interesting to see how midshipmen might have answered the Likert-scale questions if they were done *after* the discussion rather than before, or if they had been given the opportunity to go back over their answers at the end and make changes if they so wished.

***c) Does the Naval Academy Adequately Prepare Midshipmen to be Decision Makers?***

Back to the question of adequacy, or "what is good enough?" In light of the fact that midshipmen believe their decision-making skills have improved while at the Naval Academy, do company officers and midshipmen believe the Naval Academy has adequately prepared midshipmen to be effective decision makers as officer? As represented in Figure 8, midshipmen agree that it has more than the company officers do. Only 4 of 36 midshipmen (11.1%) disagree, whereas 14 of 30 company officers (46.6%) either disagree or strongly disagree. It is worthy of note that nearly half of the midshipmen (17 of 36, or 47.2%) neither agree nor disagree. This would make sense since they have not experienced what decision-making demands will be made of them, and therefore they are not sure whether or not they are adequately prepared to face what challenges lie ahead. It does not bode well, however, that of the ones who have experienced this--the company officers--less than 1 in 3 (9 of 30, or 30%) agree that the Naval Academy has done enough to prepare these midshipmen (see Figure 8).

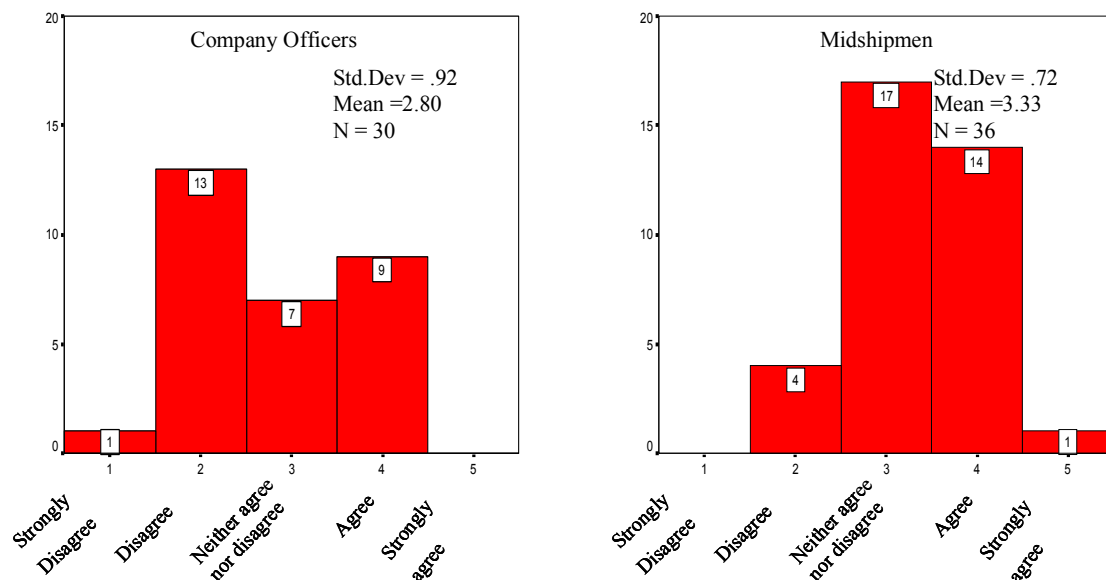


Figure 8. Agreement Ratings That the Naval Academy Adequately Prepares Midshipmen to be Effective Decision Makers as Officers

#### **4. Recommendations to Increase Decision-Making Opportunities**

The company officers and midshipmen alike were not at a loss to provide recommendations on ways to increase decision-making opportunities for midshipmen. This is a positive sign because the Navy and Marine Corps need leaders who are able to take the crucially important step beyond identifying deficiencies, which is to identify proposed solutions and improvements. The other good news is that several of these recommendations are already under consideration by various working groups and committees. Some recommendations would require new facilities (e.g. a Leadership Reaction Course) or a significant modification to the current curriculum that may be unachievable in the near term (e.g. a military intercessional or additional military training during the academic year). Others would require patience and a willingness to accept risk (e.g. reducing Mid Regs or granting the midshipmen more decision-making autonomy). Selected responses from the company officers can be found in Appendix U, and from midshipmen in Appendix V. A summary of their recommendations follows, in list format.

##### ***a) Company Officer Recommendations***

- A graduated scale of Conduct offenses
- Make the institution communicate through the midshipmen-in-charge instead of through company officers and senior enlisted leaders
- Be willing to accept mistakes
- Have a consistent policy for dealing with extremely poor decision making
- Have company officers step back and give midshipmen more room to make decisions
- Have selected 2/C midshipmen "shadow" 1/C midshipmen billet holders to increase observation of decision making
- Formalize decision-making training in ProDev

- Incorporate community-specific decision-making training into Capstone courses
- Be less concerned with brigade-wide consistency and give companies more latitude

***b) Midshipmen Recommendations***

- Have company officers solicit midshipman billet holders' opinions/decisions before announcing his or her own
- Reduce the number of rules and regulations
- Push decision-making authority down to midshipmen wherever possible
- Encourage officers to trust midshipmen to make decisions
- Allow midshipmen to make mistakes and then help them learn from those mistakes
- Enable midshipmen to recover from mistakes
- Do not reward company officers for micromanaging midshipmen
- Give midshipmen goals and then back off and allow them to try to achieve those goals
- Increase emphasis on evaluating billet holders on the performance of their units
- Determine decisions in which the institution can afford to allow midshipman to err
- Do not be afraid to allow midshipmen to try and fail

Of course none of these recommendations will succeed or last long without an institutional commitment to the importance of allowing midshipmen to make decisions. Some of these recommendations may look simple on paper, but can be much more difficult to implement, particularly when dealing with issues like trust, accepting risk, and tolerating failure. Other recommendations--like reducing the emphasis for

brigade-wide uniformity--are double-edged swords that would invariably result in legitimate concerns and dissatisfaction in other important areas. While no one of these recommendations will provide the final solution, however, they can provoke debate and lend to increased attention being paid to fostering opportunities for midshipmen to make decisions.

#### **F. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The Naval Academy's senior leadership has stated the importance of developing decision-makings skills in midshipmen to prepare them to be officers, and the company officers and midshipmen understand this importance. There are a number of ways in which midshipmen presently learn and practice decision making, but they are generally considered to be inadequate and not explicit enough. Senior leaders, company officers, and midshipmen alike have ideas about ways to increase and improve decision-making opportunities for midshipmen, and many of these ideas have been presented here. The next step would be to systematically evaluate which of these can and should be implemented, and do so within the context of an institution that is willing to accept risk and tolerate mistakes in the name of preparing midshipmen for the decision-making challenges they will face as officers.

## **V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

(Some military men) accept that the...process of making sound judgments is at the heart of military competency, and they study and practice the thinking and decision-making process in a conscientious manner (Nye, 1986, p. 8).

### **A. OVERVIEW**

The above quote, from Roger Nye's military leadership classic, *The Challenge of Command*, speaks to the issue of whether the development of decision-making expertise should be an explicit process or one that "just happens" (i.e. an implicit process). In this chapter, this and other issues pertaining to military decision making in the literature are summarized. Findings of this research are condensed and presented, followed by recommendations to the leadership of the Naval Academy pertaining to the findings. Lastly, recommendations for further research are proposed.

### **B. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

To tie the findings of this thesis back to the initial objectives, the research questions are revisited here. Next follows a very concise synopsis of the literature. Then, to support the subsequent recommendations, the findings of the research are reported.

#### **1. Research Questions**

The methodology of the research was designed to answer the primary research question of this study: What does the U.S. Naval Academy do to develop decision-making skills in its midshipmen? A number of secondary questions were addressed as well: (1) Why are decision-making skills important for military leaders? (2) What are the different decision-making models? (3) How can decision-making skills be taught or developed? (4) Has the Naval Academy stated anywhere that it places substantial emphasis on the importance of developing decision-making skills in its midshipmen, and if so, where? (5) To what extent do those responsible for the midshipmen's professional development perceive this importance? (6) What opportunities do midshipmen have to develop decision-making skills? (7) To what extent do midshipmen believe the Naval Academy is developing them as decision makers, and how is this done?

Of the secondary research questions, the first three were answered by the literature and presented in Chapter II. The fourth was answered by examining the Naval

Academy's Strategic Plan and interviewing senior leaders at the Naval Academy. The fifth question was answered by a survey completed by the company officers. This company officer survey plus focus groups conducted with midshipmen answered the sixth question, and these same focus groups answered the last secondary research question.

## **2. Decision-Making Literature**

In combat, the responsibility for making decisions is the domain of the commander and no one else (Schmitt, 1988). The decisions officers must make are often difficult and are of great consequence; military decision makers must deal with the knowledge that their decisions may send those they lead to their deaths (Allen, 1993). As difficult as these decisions may be, it is the officer's obligation to make them nonetheless, and for this he or she will need strength of character and moral courage (MCDP 1-3, 1997; Schmitt, 1988).

The Cold War is over. Today's world requires leaders at all levels who can act decisively without doubt or hesitation. The lower the level of command, the faster the decision-making cycle must be (MCDP 6, 1997). Today, rapid decision making is a force protection issue (e.g. October, 2000 terrorist attack on *USS Cole*). It is also a Maneuver Warfare issue; having capable decision makers at every level enables decentralized execution, which generates tempo and enables a force to overwhelm an enemy that relies on centralized decision making (MCDP 1, 1997).

Decision making is a skill that can be taught (Allen, 1993; Klein, 2003). With the operational environment in which newly-commissioned officers find themselves today, the Navy and Marine Corps cannot afford to rely on an implicit process of developing decision-making expertise that requires years of experience to obtain (MCDP 1-3, 1997; Klein, 2003). The process of gaining the experience necessary to be an effective decision maker can be accelerated through the process of studying military history and conducting decision-making exercises (Allen, 1993; MCDP 1-3, 1997; Wedemeyer, 1938). Frequent decision-making opportunities improve one's decision-making abilities (Klein, 2003); from a decision-making perspective, breadth of experience is more important than detail of experience (Schmitt, 1995).

### **3. Findings**

This research determined the importance the Naval Academy assigns to decision making. Having established that importance, the author learned how the Naval Academy teaches decision-making. In the course of the research, micromanagement and excessive regulations were identified as significant obstacles to decision-making opportunities for midshipmen. Lastly, company officers are in a position to have the greatest impact--positive or negative--on developing decision-making skills in midshipmen.

#### ***a) All Agree on Importance of Decision Making***

An examination of the Naval Academy's Strategic Plan and interviews with senior leaders confirmed that decision making is an essential skill for midshipmen to develop. Company officers and midshipmen communicated the importance they place on decision making in a number of ways. They both rank "Capable Decision Maker" second only to "Person of Character" among seven USNA Graduate Attributes (see Table 1). Their near-unanimous endorsement of decision making as an important trait for officers can also be found in Figures 2 & 4 and Appendices G & O.

#### ***b) "It Just Happens"***

Despite this universal agreement that midshipmen should be developed as decision makers, the Naval Academy has no explicit plan on how to achieve this end. As Colonel Allen put it, "it just happens" (J.R. Allen, personal communication, July 30, 2003). As for formal instruction, midshipmen receive one half of one class period, or 25 minutes, of decision-making instruction in the course of their four years at the Naval Academy; the rest just happens (or perhaps does not). In light of the stated importance of decision making previously established, one would have to describe this as woefully inadequate.

#### ***c) Micromanagement and Excessive Regulations***

To create an environment in which midshipmen are eager to make decisions and prepared to accept responsibility for the consequences, there must exist an atmosphere of trust and tolerance for mistakes. This atmosphere does not exist at the Naval Academy. Instead, midshipmen are generally micromanaged and, as a rule, decisions of consequence are taken away from them. This is the situation as described by midshipmen and company officers alike (see Appendices L, M, N, P, Q, R, & T).

Company officers and midshipmen believe that Midshipmen Regulations (Mid Regs) are excessively burdensome and in an effort to meticulously account for every conceivable eventuality, opportunity for judgment and decision making are effectively eliminated. Instead of decision makers, midshipmen--and even company officers--are mere executors of an exhaustingly encompassing script.

***d) We Do Not Train the Way We Fight***

The predictable result of the environment described is that midshipmen do not get much opportunity to make decisions of consequence. Instead, decisions made by midshipmen are largely relegated to personal decisions, that is, decisions that affect no one but themselves (a notable and significant exception to this is the USNA Honor System). Even those who hold leadership positions--stripers--do not get to make many decisions that can be likened to the type they will be required to make as commissioned officers. With few exceptions, "decisions" made by midshipmen can be more accurately described as "recommendations" since they most often require the endorsement of an officer. Midshipmen believe company officers are too quick to intervene and provide the "right" answer rather than allow midshipmen to make mistakes from which they can learn. This oppressive "safety net" likely will not be there for them once midshipmen are commissioned, and it would seem to do them a disservice to prevent them from learning these lessons in an environment that is supposed to be a "leadership laboratory" (see Appendices L, M, & N).

***e) The Role of the Company Officer***

More than anyone else, the company officer is uniquely positioned to have an enormous effect on midshipmen's decision-making development. They have the most direct and frequent interaction with midshipmen, and the ones who demonstrate trust and a willingness to allow midshipmen to try and maybe even fail were lauded by their midshipmen. In sharp contrast, the company officers who are quick to step in and provide midshipmen with "the answer" were resented by their midshipmen (see Appendices M, N, R, & V). On the company officers' part, many feel handcuffed by Mid Regs, by an institutional insistence that things be done absolutely correctly the first time, and by measures designed to achieve brigade-wide uniformity that severely restrict

company officers' latitude and ability to develop their midshipmen (see Appendices L, P, Q, T, & U).

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of this research was to assess what the Naval Academy does to develop decision-making skills in its midshipmen. By applying the decision-making literature to the findings presented here, the author has come up with a number of recommendations that would assist the Naval Academy leadership in realizing its vision of producing officers who are effective decision makers. Some recommendations would require precious time and resources, but most are made with the goal that the Naval Academy be able to more effectively develop decision-making skills in midshipmen without adding to the existing curriculum.

### **1. Make an Institutional Commitment to Decision Making**

The Navy and Marine Corps include courage and commitment among their core values; any effort to develop midshipmen as decision makers would require both. To begin the journey toward becoming expert decision makers, midshipmen need more than theory--they need opportunity. *They need the opportunity to practice making decisions*, and practice invariably involves failure. Failure involves risk, and risk demands courage. The specter of failure requires perseverance and commitment.

The Naval Academy need not accept imprudent risks to create decision-making opportunities for midshipmen. But to identify and commit to areas in which the institution can tolerate mistakes in the name of professional development would be a demonstration of trust and moral courage the midshipmen need to see from their leaders and role models. Such a commitment would call for an end to micromanagement, liberating those officers who want to empower their midshipmen and challenging those who find comfort and refuge in leading by regulations.

### **2. Develop a Plan**

Once the institution makes clear its commitment to developing decision-making skills in midshipmen, it must develop and communicate a plan to achieve its desired endstate. The senior leadership's desire that midshipmen be allowed to make decisions--and mistakes--should be communicated to all those who contribute to midshipmen development: company officers, faculty, coaches, and so forth. The goal would be to

progress beyond an environment that merely *allows* midshipmen to make decisions and becomes one that *demand*s decisions of midshipmen. Decision-making opportunities should not just be *available* to midshipmen, they must be made *inescapable* for midshipmen.

### **3. Formalize Decision-Making Instruction**

The decision-making Tactical Initiative in the Naval Academy's Strategic Plan calls for a formalized definition of decision making and identifying opportunities to include embedded decision making in the daily midshipmen routine (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004). This addresses Captain Leidig's desire to identify what type of decisions the Naval Academy wants midshipmen to be making and then to extract decision-making opportunities from existing training and education (C.J. Leidig, personal communication, February 10, 2004). The decision-making Strategic Initiative looks to combine theoretical classroom training with computer simulations and some sort of outdoor, hands-on, practical application (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004).

The literature review in this study points out a number of methods for developing decision-making skills in midshipmen. For example, Klein has developed a three-step Intuitive Skills Training Program (2003). The first step is to identify the decision requirements of a particular job or billet. As applied to the Naval Academy, this would mean identifying the decisions the senior leadership wants midshipmen to be making. The next step is to duplicate the conditions in which those decisions would have to be made. The literature review presents a number of ways in which this can be done. In addition to discussing historical examples of combat decisions and conducting decision-making games, two other prominent ways this could be done at the Naval Academy include fully utilizing the new simulator in Luce Hall and constructing a Leadership Reaction Course--similar to the one at the Marine Corps's Officer Candidate School in Quantico--at North Severn, as envisioned in the Strategic Initiative (USNA Strategic Plan, 2004). The third step in Klein's ISTP, and one that is absolutely critical, is to incorporate feedback in all decision-making training (Klein, 2003).

Concerning what midshipmen should be taught about decision making in the classroom, the author suggests the following: 1) the role of the officer as a decision maker and the importance of decision-making skills in officers; 2) the two primary

decision-making models, analytical and intuitive; 3) ways to develop decision-making skills; and, 4) the imperative that they develop themselves as decision makers. Including this in NL112 (Leadership and Human Behavior) would communicate to midshipmen early on what will be expected of them as decision makers. To make room in the NL112 curriculum for increased decision-making instruction, the curriculum should be reevaluated in accordance with the high priority the senior leadership of the Naval Academy places on decision making.

#### **4. Evaluate Midshipmen on Decision Making**

Having formalized decision-making training, which would include identifying decision-making expectations of midshipmen, they should then be evaluated on their decision-making performance. Not only will this facilitate midshipmen seeking opportunities to make decisions and improve at it, but it will force the evaluators to give midshipmen feedback. Feedback is an absolutely essential piece of decision-making training and must not be neglected (Allen, 1993; Klein, 2003; MCDP 1-3, 1997; Schmitt, 1995). Even though the Navy evaluation report and fitness report the Naval Academy uses do not evaluate decision making, it could be made a mandatory comment, and the Marine Corps fitness report could be used as a reference for how to frame the evaluation of decision making (see Appendix K). To do this would require instructions for the evaluators so they would know how to give feedback on decision making, but this investment would continue to pay off long after midshipmen leave the Naval Academy.

#### **5. Reevaluate Midshipmen Regulations**

It was not the intent of this research to take on the Midshipmen Regulations (Mid Regs). That said, Mid Regs was a ubiquitous variable in the process of assessing the decision-making opportunities midshipmen have. Company officers and midshipmen alike were adamant that Mid Regs almost entirely eliminates the need for--or even the tolerance for--judgment and decision making (see Appendices M, N, Q, R, & V). Although the issue of Mid Regs transcends the scope of this research many times over, the author nonetheless recommends that the leadership of the Naval Academy reevaluates Mid Regs to determine whether or not it is having the desired effect on producing officers who are willing to and capable of making decisions.

#### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As with any research, this thesis necessarily left avenues not fully pursued and questions unanswered. In this light, the author has four recommendations for further research. The first recommendation concerns the sample. This thesis managed to get views from *within* the Naval Academy about how well midshipmen are being developed as decision makers. What would be useful to know, however, is what do those *outside* the Naval Academy think about how well USNA is doing in this regard? Specifically, commanders in the Fleet and in the Marine Corps could be asked how satisfied they are with Naval Academy graduates' decision-making abilities. They could be asked how Naval Academy graduates compare in this regard to other officers in their commands who were commissioned via other sources. Included, as well, in this sample could be post-command officers who are presently stationed at the Naval Academy. This information would be useful to the Naval Academy, even if the findings were that there is no significant difference concerning decision-making abilities between Naval Academy graduates and non-graduates.

A second area this thesis did not cover is what is taught at the different follow-on schools regarding decision making. This information could be useful to the Naval Academy in determining what should be taught here to ensure that the "final product" that hits the Fleet is a capable decision maker. The third recommendation would be to investigate what the other service academies teach their cadets about decision making so that the Naval Academy could make comparisons and choose to adopt aspects and techniques it might deem useful. Lastly, the USNA Leadership Task Force's final report should be carefully examined to learn what findings apply to developing midshipmen as decision makers.

## **APPENDIX A: COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (COLONEL ALLEN)**

Today I would like to discuss the topic of decision making (DM) as it relates to the culture and curriculum at the Naval Academy.

- 1) Would you begin by explaining what you consider to be the relationship between leadership and DM? Are they distinct or inter-related?
- 2) You frequently use the term "a bias for decision making." Please explain what you mean by a leader possessing "a bias for decision making?"
- 3) How, and to what extent, does the Naval Academy currently develop decision makers? How does the overall process work? Is the process adequate? Why or why not?
- 4) Can you provide concrete examples of the strengths and weaknesses of DM outcomes here at the Naval Academy?
- 5) How is the environment IRT DM different here at the Naval Academy than elsewhere (e.g. the Fleet)? Why?
- 6) What has been done here in the past to develop decision makers? How and when has the curriculum changed? Why did it change? Has it changed for the better or worse?
- 7) Are you aware of anything that is done differently at the other service academies that we might want to adopt here at the Naval Academy? Avoid? Do you have any points of contact there?
- 8) What are your goals and priorities with regard to DM opportunities at the Naval Academy? What changes would you make? How important is this DM initiative compared to others? Would you increase DM opportunities at the expense of other subjects?
- 9) What do you envision IRT a timeline for implementing any initiative? Resources available? Constraints and restraints?
- 10) What/whom do you consider to be the obstacles to successful implementation of any initiative? Is there a justification for/defense of the status quo? What? By whom? Why? What needs to be done to overcome these obstacles?
- 11) Whom do you deem to be the critical players in any initiative? With whom will I need to work closely? Would you support forming a focus group(s)?
- 12) Would you support/endorse a survey of attitudes and opinions from various people within the institution and Naval service (e.g. midshipmen, company and battalion

officers, faculty, alumni, commanders in the Fleet) about how the present culture at the Naval Academy affects DM?

13) How would you define success, i.e. mission accomplishment? What would be the indicators of success? Should they be evaluated formally?

14) Is there any literature you would recommend that would contribute to my research?

## **APPENDIX B: COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (CAPTAIN LEIDIG)**

1. Is it important for junior officers in the Navy and Marine Corps to be able to make decisions? Do the requirements vary among the service communities? If so, how?
2. What is the Naval Academy's role in developing decision-making skills in its midshipmen? How well does it accomplish this?
3. Is it a priority for the Naval Academy to develop decision-making skills in its midshipmen? If so, how does this manifest itself in time and resources devoted to developing these skills?
4. What changes, if any, would you like to see in the way midshipmen are developed as decision makers?

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## **APPENDIX C: DIRECTOR OF LEL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

- 1) Would each of you explain what your billet is and how it is related to developing decision makers at the Naval Academy?
- 2) What does the Naval Academy presently do to develop midshipmen's decision making abilities and provide practical application opportunities?
- 3) Would you say that the curriculum is rooted in any particular decision-making model (e.g. analytical, intuitive, etc.)?
- 4) What are the goals of the curriculum? What direction have you received, and from whom?
- 5) What are the measures of effectiveness?
- 6) Do you think the Naval Academy is accomplishing its goals? Why or why not?
- 7) What do you think detracts from fully achieving the objectives (e.g. challenges of leading peers, overbearing company officers, exacting midshipmen regulations, etc.)?
- 8) From your perspective, is risk aversion a contributor? If so, how significant is it? Why does it exist? What are its roots? How can it be overcome?
- 9) What is your road map for developing decision makers at the Naval Academy? Do you have any initiatives being considered or underway?
- 10) Within the next 45 days or so, the Naval Academy will have a new Superintendent and a new Commandant of Midshipmen. Do you have any indications or expectations about how this may affect your present curriculum or potential initiatives?
- 11) Would you be interested in forming a focus group to incorporate my research with your efforts? If so, whom should it include?

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## APPENDIX D: COMPANY OFFICER SURVEY

### Operational definition of decision making

Decision making is the process of identifying essential factors, developing options, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each, and selecting a solution. For the purposes of this survey, decision making is confined to the performance of one's leadership responsibilities, military or otherwise.

**Part I.** Rank the following attributes in the order of importance you place upon them as being necessary for a USNA graduate (1 = most important, 7 = least important; no ties, please):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Effective communicator
- \_\_\_\_\_ High academic GPA
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physically fit
- \_\_\_\_\_ Committed to Equal Opportunity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Capable decision maker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Geopolitically astute
- \_\_\_\_\_ Person of character

**Part II.** Use the following scale to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (space is provided for optional comments after each statement).

| (1)             | (2)             | (3)                  | (4)          | (5)             |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <i>Strongly</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Neither agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly</i> |
| <i>disagree</i> |                 | <i>nor disagree</i>  |              | <i>agree</i>    |

1. \_\_\_\_\_ It is important that midshipmen's decision-making skills are developed while at the Naval Academy.

Comments:

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Midshipmen understand the importance of developing decision-making skills to prepare them to be officers.

Comments:

3. \_\_\_\_\_ The types of decisions midshipmen make prepare them for the types of decisions they will make as officers.

Comments:

4. \_\_\_\_ Sufficient time and resources are devoted to developing decision-making skills in midshipmen at the Naval Academy.

Comments:

5. \_\_\_\_ An officer must be able to make decisions under time pressure and uncertainty.

Comments:

6. \_\_\_\_ The Naval Academy adequately prepares midshipmen to be effective decision makers as officers.

Comments:

### **Part III. Short answers**

1. What types of decisions do midshipmen get to make?

2. Do midshipmen have adequate opportunities to make decisions? If not, what limits these opportunities?

3. What recommendations do you have on how to give midshipmen more opportunities to prepare to be decision makers as officers?

**Part IV.** Please indicate your service community.

- ☐ Surface Warfare
- ☐ Naval Aviation
- ☐ Submarine
- ☐ SpecOps/SpecWar
- ☐ Marine Ground
- ☐ Marine Air

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## APPENDIX E: MIDSHIPMEN FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Rank the following attributes in the order of importance you place upon them as being necessary for a USNA graduate (1 = most important, 7 = least important; no ties, please):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Effective communicator
- \_\_\_\_\_ High academic GPA
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physically fit
- \_\_\_\_\_ Committed to Equal Opportunity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Capable decision maker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Geopolitically astute
- \_\_\_\_\_ Person of character

*Use the following scale to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.*

|                 |                 |                      |              |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| (1)             | (2)             | (3)                  | (4)          | (5)             |
| <i>Strongly</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Neither agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly</i> |
| <i>disagree</i> |                 | <i>nor disagree</i>  |              | <i>agree</i>    |

1. \_\_\_\_\_ It is important that midshipmen are developed as decision makers while at the Naval Academy.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Sufficient time and resources are devoted to developing decision-making skills in midshipmen at the Naval Academy.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ My decision-making skills have improved while at the Naval Academy.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ An officer must be able to make decisions under time pressure and uncertainty.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The Naval Academy has adequately prepared me to be an effective decision maker as an officer.

### Operational definition of decision making

Decision making is the process of identifying essential factors, developing options, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each, and selecting a solution. For the purposes of this survey, decision making is confined to the performance of one's leadership responsibilities, military or otherwise.

### Operational definition of a "gut-wrenching" decision

A "gut-wrenching" decision is a decision that causes a person great anguish and is very difficult to make because the costs of the decision will be very significant for those affected.

### Focus Group Questions

1. What types of decisions do midshipmen get to make?
2. How often, if ever, do midshipmen have to make "gut-wrenching" decisions related to their leadership position? With what type of "gut-wrenching" decisions are they faced?
3. Do midshipmen have adequate opportunities to make decisions? If not, what limits these opportunities?
4. What recommendations do you have on how to give midshipmen more opportunities to prepare to be decision makers as officers?

## APPENDIX F: MIDSHIPMEN FOCUS GROUP DEMOGRAPHIC WORKSHEET

1. Gender: Male / Female (circle one)

2. **PRESENT** Leadership position(s):

a. Within the Brigade

-Billet title: \_\_\_\_\_

-Number of stripes: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Sports

-Name of sport(s): \_\_\_\_\_

-Level (varsity, JV, club, intramural, other): \_\_\_\_\_

-Leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_

-Number of stripes: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Extracurricular activity (ECA)

-Name of ECA: \_\_\_\_\_

-Leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Other (example: Summer Cruise, Plebe Summer):

3. **PAST** Leadership positions, if any, by year:

2/C year

a. Within the Brigade

-Billet title: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Sports

-Name of sport: \_\_\_\_\_

-Level of sport (varsity, JV, club, intramural, other): \_\_\_\_\_

-Leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Extracurricular activity (ECA)

-Name of ECA: \_\_\_\_\_

-Leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Other (example: Plebe Detail):

Youngster year (3/C)

- a. Within the Brigade
  - Billet title: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Sports
  - Name of sport: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Level of sport (varsity, JV, club, intramural, other): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Extracurricular activity (ECA)
  - Name of ECA: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Other (example: Summer Seminar):

Plebe year (4/C)

- a. Within the Brigade
  - Billet title: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Sports
  - Name of sport: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Level of sport (varsity, JV, club, intramural, other): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Extracurricular activity (ECA)
  - Name of ECA: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Other:

4. **Sports** played while at USNA (please indicate level, i.e. varsity, JV, club, intramurals, other):

- a. 1/C year \_\_\_\_\_
- b. 2/C year \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Youngster year \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Plebe year \_\_\_\_\_

5. Approximate Military ranking:

6. Approximate Academic ranking:

7. Approximate Order of Merit:

8. Top 3 choices for Service Assignment: 1.

2.

3.

9. Prior enlisted: Y/N

If yes, branch of service: \_\_\_\_\_

number of years: \_\_\_\_\_

rating/MOS: \_\_\_\_\_

highest rank/rate achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Family members in the Service: Y/N

If yes, who: \_\_\_\_\_

branch of service: \_\_\_\_\_

number of years: \_\_\_\_\_

rating/MOS: \_\_\_\_\_

highest rank/rate achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

If more than one:

who: \_\_\_\_\_

branch of service: \_\_\_\_\_

number of years: \_\_\_\_\_

rating/MOS: \_\_\_\_\_

highest rank/rate achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

who: \_\_\_\_\_

branch of service: \_\_\_\_\_

number of years: \_\_\_\_\_

rating/MOS: \_\_\_\_\_

highest rank/rate achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **APPENDIX G: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT MIDSHIPMEN'S DECISION-MAKING SKILLS ARE DEVELOPED WHILE AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

This is the time they learn to make decisions both large and small...the expectation is that we are training them to make the correct decisions in the Fleet when no one is looking.

Early development is vital for any trait that is important...(the Naval Academy offers) opportunities to make decisions in a controlled environment.

If they do not develop (decision-making skills) while a midshipman, it is likely they will not develop after USNA either.

(Midshipmen) need to thoroughly understand the concept (of decision making)...the problem is that midshipmen choose to avoid many of the (decision-making) opportunities. We need to emphasize the opportunities as well as make them inescapable.

(Yes,) however, there is a distinct cultural difference between the USN and USMC regarding the expectations of a junior officer (relative to decision making).

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## **APPENDIX H: MIDSHIPMEN UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING DECISION-MAKING SKILLS TO PREPARE THEM TO BE OFFICERS (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

They don't always understand the decisions they make with the consequences that occur.

I don't think some of these (midshipmen) REALLY understand that they are going to be officers until they actually get to the Fleet.

The average midshipman does not understand this...for the most part, stripers do.

(Midshipmen) do not grasp just how important (decision making) will be once they graduate.

There is a large division...(of) midshipmen who "get it"...and those midshipmen who have a hard time understanding the desired endstate of USNA.

Their training is never explained to them in terms of decision-making.

They don't have an understanding of (the importance of decision making) at all.

Midshipmen do not have enough life experience to understand the burden of responsibility...It is not until they get into the Fleet and actually see the ramifications of their good and bad decisions that they really "learn" and "understand" what we are trying to teach them here. Until then, we are just building a foundation of character and judgment that can be later applied.

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# APPENDIX I: NAVY EVALUATION REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD

## EVALUATION REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD (E1 - E6)

RCS BUPERS1610.-1

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                       |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Name (Last, First MI Suffix)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | 2. Rate                                         |  | 3. Desig                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | 4. SSN                                |  |
| 5. ACT <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | TAR <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | INACT <input type="checkbox"/>                  |  | AT/ADSW/265 <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | 6. UIC                                |  |
| 7. Ship/Station                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | 8. Promotion Status                             |  | 9. Date Reported                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                       |  |
| Occasion for Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | Period of Report                                |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                       |  |
| 10. Periodic <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | 11. Detachment of Individual <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | 12. Promotion/Frocking <input type="checkbox"/> |  | 13. Special <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | 14. From: 15. To:                     |  |
| 16. Not Observed Report <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | 17. Regular <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | 18. Concurrent <input type="checkbox"/>         |  | 20. Physical Readiness                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | 21. Billet Subcategory (if any)       |  |
| 22. Reporting Senior (Last, FI MI)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | 23. Grade                                       |  | 24. Desig                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  | 25. Title                             |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | 26. UIC                                         |  | 27. SSN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                       |  |
| 28. Command employment and command achievements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                       |  |
| 29. Primary/Collateral/Watchstanding duties. (Enter primary duty abbreviation in box.)                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                       |  |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                       |  |
| For Mid term Counseling Use. (When completing EVAL, enter 30 and 31 from counseling worksheet, and sign 32.)                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | 30. Date Counseled                              |  | 31. Counselor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  | 32. Signature of Individual Counseled |  |
| <b>PERFORMANCE TRAITS:</b> 1.0 - Below standards/not progressing or UNSAT in any one standard; 2.0 - Does not yet meet all 3.0 standards; 3.0 - Meets all 3.0 standards; 4.0 - Exceeds most 3.0 standards; 5.0 - Meets overall criteria and most of the specific standards for 5.0. Standards are not all inclusive. |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                       |  |
| <b>PERFORMANCE TRAITS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | <b>1.0* Below Standards</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | <b>2.0 Pro-gressing</b>                         |  | <b>3.0 Meets Standards</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | <b>4.0 Above Standards</b>            |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | <b>5.0 Greatly Exceeds Standards</b>  |  |
| <b>33. PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE:</b><br>Technical knowledge and practical application.<br><br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                             |  | - Marginal knowledge of rating, specialty or job.<br>- Unable to apply knowledge to solve routine problems.<br>- Fails to meet advancement/PQS requirements.                                                                                                                                                                              |  | -<br>-<br>-                                     |  | - Strong working knowledge of rating, specialty and job.<br>- Reliably applies knowledge to accomplish tasks.<br>- Meets advancement/PQS requirements on time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | -<br>-<br>-                           |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                        |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | <input type="checkbox"/>              |  |
| <b>34. QUALITY OF WORK:</b><br>Standard of work; value of end product.<br><br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | - Needs excessive supervision.<br>- Product frequently needs rework.<br>- Wasteful of resources.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  | -<br>-<br>-                                     |  | - Needs little supervision.<br>- Produces quality work. Few errors and resulting rework.<br>- Uses resources efficiently.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  | -<br>-<br>-                           |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                        |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | <input type="checkbox"/>              |  |
| <b>35. COMMAND OR ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:</b><br>Contributing to growth and development, human worth, community.<br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                   |  | - Actions counter to Navy's retention/recruitment goals.<br>- Uninvolved with mentoring or professional development of subordinates.<br>- Actions counter to good order and discipline and negatively affect Command/Organizational climate.<br>- Demonstrates exclusionary behavior. Fails to value differences from cultural diversity. |  | -<br>-<br>-                                     |  | - Positive leadership supports Navy's increased retention goals. Active in decreasing attrition.<br>- Actions adequately encourage/support subordinates' personal/professional growth.<br>- Demonstrates appreciation for contributions of Navy personnel. Positive influence on Command climate.<br>- Values differences as strengths. Fosters atmosphere of acceptance/inclusion per EO/EEO policy. |  | -<br>-<br>-                           |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                        |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | <input type="checkbox"/>              |  |
| <b>36. MILITARY BEARING/ CHARACTER:</b><br>Appearance, conduct, physical fitness, adherence to Navy Core Values.<br><br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                 |  | - Consistently unsatisfactory appearance.<br>- Poor self-control; conduct resulting in disciplinary action.<br>- Unable to meet one or more physical readiness standards.<br>- Fails to live up to one or more Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.                                                                              |  | -<br>-<br>-                                     |  | - Excellent personal appearance.<br>- Excellent conduct, conscientiously complies with regulations.<br>- Complies with physical readiness program.<br>- Always lives up to Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.                                                                                                                                                                              |  | -<br>-<br>-                           |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                        |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | <input type="checkbox"/>              |  |
| <b>37. PERSONAL JOB ACCOMPLISHMENT/ INITIATIVE:</b><br>Responsibility, quantity of work.<br><br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                         |  | - Needs prodding to attain qualification or finish job.<br>- Prioritizes poorly.<br>- Avoids responsibility.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | -<br>-<br>-                                     |  | - Productive and motivated. Completes tasks and qualifications fully and on time.<br>- Plans/prioritizes effectively.<br>- Reliable, dependable, willingly accepts responsibility.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  | -<br>-<br>-                           |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                        |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | <input type="checkbox"/>              |  |

NAVPERS 1616/26 (Rev. 3-02)

# EVALUATION REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD (E1 - E6) (cont'd) RCS BUPERS 1616.2

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                      |                            |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Name (Last, First MI Suffix)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                      | 2. Rate                    |            | 3. Desig                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                        | 4. SSN                                                                                          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| <b>PERFORMANCE TRAITS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 1.0*<br>Below Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                      | 2.0<br>Pro-<br>gressing    |            | 3.0<br>Meets Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                        | 4.0<br>Above<br>Standards                                                                       |  | 5.0<br>Greatly Exceeds Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
| <b>38. TEAMWORK:</b><br>Contributions to team building and team results.<br><br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  | - Creates conflict, unwilling to work with others, puts self above team.<br>- Fails to understand team goals or teamwork techniques.<br>- Does not take direction well.                                                                                                                                                       |                      | -<br>-<br>-                |            | - Reinforces others' efforts, meets commitments to team.<br>- Understands goals, employs good teamwork techniques.<br>- Accepts and offers team direction.                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                        | -<br>-<br>-                                                                                     |  | - Team builder, inspires cooperation and progress.<br>- Focuses goals and techniques for teams.<br>- The best at accepting and offering team direction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| <b>39. LEADERSHIP:</b><br>Organizing, motivating and developing others to accomplish goals.<br><br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | - Neglects growth/development or welfare of subordinates.<br>- Fails to organize, creates problems for subordinates.<br>- Does not set or achieve goals relevant to command mission and vision.<br>- Lacks ability to cope with or tolerate stress.<br>- Inadequate communicator.<br>- Tolerates hazards or unsafe practices. |                      | -<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>- |            | - Effectively stimulates growth/development in subordinates.<br>- Organizes successfully implementing process improvements and efficiencies.<br>- Sets/achieves useful, realistic goals that support command mission.<br>- Performs well in stressful situations.<br>- Clear, timely communicator.<br>- Ensures safety of personnel and equipment. |                                                                                                                                                        | -<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>-                                                                      |  | - Inspiring motivator and trainer, subordinates reach highest level of growth and development.<br>- Superb organizer, great foresight, develops process improvements and efficiencies.<br>- Leadership achievements dramatically further command mission and vision.<br>- Perseveres through the toughest challenges and inspires others.<br>- Exceptional communicator.<br>- Makes subordinates safety conscious, maintains top safety record.<br>- Constantly improves the personal and professional lives of others. |  |
| 40. Individual Trait Avg.<br>Total of trait scores divided by number of graded traits.<br><br><input type="text"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | 41. I recommend this individual for (maximum of two): Assignment in Rating, Sea Special Programs, Shore Special Programs, Commissioning Programs, Special Warfare Programs, Rating Instructor Duty, Other. (Be specific.)<br><input type="text"/>                                                                             |                      |                            |            | 42. Signature of Rater (Typed Name & Rate): I have evaluated this member against the above performance standards and have forwarded written explanation of marks of 1.0 and 5.0.<br><br><div style="text-align: right;">Date:</div>                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 43. COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE. *All 1.0 marks, three 2.0 marks, and 2.0 marks in Block 35 must be specifically substantiated in comments. Comments must be verifiable. Font must be 10 or 12 pitch (10 to 12 point) only. Use upper and lower case.                                                                                    |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                      |                            |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 44. QUALIFICATIONS/ACHIEVEMENTS - Education, awards, community involvement, etc., during this period.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                      |                            |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| <b>Promotion Recommendation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | NOB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Significant Problems | Progressing                | Promotable | Must Promote                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Early Promote                                                                                                                                          | 47. Retention:<br>Not Recommended <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended <input type="checkbox"/> |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 45. INDIVIDUAL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                      |                            |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                        | 48. Reporting Senior Address<br><br><input type="text"/>                                        |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 46. SUMMARY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                      |                            |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 49. Signature of Senior Rater (Typed Name & Grade/Rate): I have reviewed the evaluation of this member against these performance standards and have provided written explanation to support marks of 1.0 and 5.0.<br><br><div style="text-align: right;">Date:</div>                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                      |                            |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 50. Signature of Reporting Senior<br><br><div style="text-align: right;">Date:</div>                                                                   |                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 51. Signature of Individual Evaluated. "I have seen this report, been apprised of my performance, and understand my right to submit a statement."<br><br>I intend to submit a statement. <input type="checkbox"/> I do not intend to submit a statement. <input type="checkbox"/><br><br><div style="text-align: right;">Date:</div> |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                      |                            |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 52. Typed name, grade, command, UIC, and signature of Regular Reporting Senior on Concurrent Report<br><br><div style="text-align: right;">Date:</div> |                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |

# APPENDIX J: NAVY FITNESS REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD

## FITNESS REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD (E7 - O6)

RCS BUPERS 1610-1

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                       |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Name (Last, First MI Suffix)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 2. Grade/Rate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  | 3. Desig                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | 4. SSN                                |  |
| 5. ACT <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | TAR <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | INACT <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | AT/ADSW/265 <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 6. UIC                                |  |
| 7. Ship/Station                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 8. Promotion Status                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | 9. Date Reported                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |                                       |  |
| Occasion for Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | Period of Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                       |  |
| 10. Periodic <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | 11. Detachment of Individual <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | 12. Detachment of Reporting Senior <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | 13. Special <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 14. From: 15. To:                     |  |
| 16. Not Observed Report <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | Type of Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  | 17. Regular <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | 18. Concurrent <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  | 19. Ops Cdr <input type="checkbox"/>  |  |
| 20. Physical Readiness                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 21. Billet Subcategory (if any)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                       |  |
| 22. Reporting Senior (Last, FI MI)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 23. Grade                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  | 24. Desig                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | 25. Title                             |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 26. UIC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | 27. SSN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |                                       |  |
| 28. Command employment and command achievements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                       |  |
| 29. Primary/Collateral/Watchstanding duties. (Enter primary duty abbreviation in box.)                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                       |  |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                       |  |
| For Mid-term Counseling Use. (When completing FITREP enter 30 and 31 from counseling worksheet sign 32.)                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 30. Date Counseled                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  | 31. Counselor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | 32. Signature of Individual Counseled |  |
| <b>PERFORMANCE TRAITS:</b> 1.0 - Below standards/not progressing or UNSAT in any one standard; 2.0 - Does not yet meet all 3.0 standards; 3.0 - Meets all 3.0 standards; 4.0 - Exceeds most 3.0 standards; 5.0 - Meets overall criteria and most of the specific standards for 5.0. Standards are not all inclusive. |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                       |  |
| <b>PERFORMANCE TRAITS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | 1.0*<br>Below Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  | 2.0<br>Pro<br>gressing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | 3.0<br>Meets Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  | 4.0<br>Above<br>Standards             |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | 5.0<br>Greatly Exceeds Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                       |  |
| 33. <b>PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE:</b><br>Professional knowledge, proficiency, and qualifications.<br><br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | - Lacks basic professional knowledge to perform effectively.<br>- Cannot apply basic skills.<br>- Fails to develop professionally or achieve timely qualifications.                                                                                                                                                                        |  | - Has thorough professional knowledge.<br>- Competently performs both routine and new tasks.<br>- Steadily improves skills, achieves timely qualifications.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | - Recognized expert, sought after to solve difficult problems.<br>- Exceptionally skilled, develops and executes innovative ideas.<br>- Achieves early/highly advanced qualifications.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |                                       |  |
| 34. <b>COMMAND OR ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:</b><br>Contributing to growth and development, human worth, community.<br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                   |  | - Actions counter to Navy's retention/reenlistment goals.<br>- Uninvolved with mentoring or professional development of subordinates.<br>- Actions counter to good order and discipline and negatively affect Command/Organizational climate.<br>- Demonstrates exclusionary behavior. Fails to value differences from cultural diversity. |  | - Positive leadership supports Navy's increased retention goals. Active in decreasing attrition.<br>- Actions adequately encourage/support subordinates' personal/professional growth.<br>- Demonstrates appreciation for contributions of Navy personnel. Positive influence on Command climate.<br>- Values differences as strengths. Fosters atmosphere of acceptance/inclusion per EO/EEO policy. |  | - Measurably contributes to Navy's increased retention and reduced attrition objectives.<br>- Proactive leader/exemplary mentor. Involved in subordinates' personal development leading to professional growth/sustained commitment.<br>- Initiates support programs for military, civilian, and families to achieve exceptional Command and Organizational climate.<br>- The model of achievement. Develops unit cohesion by valuing differences as strengths. |  |                                       |  |
| 35. <b>MILITARY BEARING/ CHARACTER:</b><br>Appearance, conduct, physical fitness, adherence to Navy Core Values.<br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                     |  | - Consistently unsatisfactory appearance.<br>- Unsatisfactory demeanor or conduct.<br>- Unable to meet one or more physical readiness standards.<br>- Fails to live up to one or more Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.                                                                                                        |  | - Excellent personal appearance.<br>- Excellent demeanor or conduct.<br>- Complies with physical readiness program.<br>- Always lives up to Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  | - Exemplary personal appearance.<br>- Exemplary representative of Navy.<br>- A leader in physical readiness.<br>- Exemplifies Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |                                       |  |
| 36. <b>TEAMWORK:</b><br>Contributions towards team building and team results.<br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | - Creates conflict, unwilling to work with others, puts self above team.<br>- Fails to understand team goals or teamwork techniques.<br>- Does not take direction well.                                                                                                                                                                    |  | - Reinforces others' efforts, meets personal commitments to team.<br>- Understands team goals, employs good teamwork techniques.<br>- Accepts and offers team direction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | - Team builder, inspires cooperation and progress.<br>- Talented mentor, focuses goals and techniques for team.<br>- The best at accepting and offering team direction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |                                       |  |
| 37. <b>MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT AND INITIATIVE:</b><br>Taking initiative, planning/prioritizing, achieving mission.<br>NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                    |  | - Lacks initiative.<br>- Unable to plan or prioritize.<br>- Does not maintain readiness.<br>- Fails to get the job done.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | - Takes initiative to meet goals.<br>- Plans/prioritizes effectively.<br>- Maintains high state of readiness.<br>- Always gets the job done.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  | - Develops innovative ways to accomplish mission.<br>- Plans/prioritizes with exceptional skill and foresight.<br>- Maintains superior readiness, even with limited resources.<br>- Gets jobs done earlier and far better than expected.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |                                       |  |

NAVPERS 1610/2 (Rev. 3-02)

# FITNESS REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD (E7 - O6) (cont'd)

RCS BUPERS 1610-1

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Name (Last, First MI Suffix)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                        | 2. Grade/Rate                   |            | 3. Desig                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |               | 4. SSN                          |  |
| <b>PERFORMANCE TRAITS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  | 1.0*<br>Below Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                        | 2.0<br>Pro-<br>gressing         |            | 3.0<br>Meets Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |               | 4.0<br>Above<br>Standards       |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | 5.0<br>Greatly Exceeds Standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                        |                                 |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |                                 |  |
| 38. <b>LEADERSHIP:</b><br>Organizing, motivating and developing others to accomplish goals.                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | - Neglects growth/development or welfare of subordinates.<br>- Fails to organize, creates problems for subordinates.<br>- Does not set or achieve goals relevant to command mission and vision.<br>- Lacks ability to cope with or tolerate stress.<br>- Inadequate communicator.<br>- Tolerates hazards or unsafe practices. |                        | -<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>- |            | - Effectively stimulates growth/development in subordinates.<br>- Organizes successfully implementing process improvements and efficiencies.<br>- Sets/achieves useful, realistic goals that support command mission.<br>- Performs well in stressful situations.<br>- Clear, timely communicator.<br>- Ensures safety of personnel and equipment. |               | -<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>-<br>- |  |
| NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>        |            | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |               | <input type="checkbox"/>        |  |
| 39. <b>TACTICAL PERFORMANCE:</b><br>(Warfare qualified officers only)<br>Basic and tactical employment of weapons systems.                                                                                                                                                            |  | - Has difficulty attaining qualifications expected for rank and experience.<br>- Has difficulty in ship(s), aircraft or weapons systems employment.<br>- Below others in knowledge and employment.<br>- Warfare skills in specialty are below standards compared to others of same rank and experience.                       |                        | -<br>-<br>-<br>-                |            | - Attains qualifications as required and expected.<br>- Capably employs ship(s), aircraft, or weapons systems. Equal to others in warfare knowledge and employment.<br>- Warfare skills in specialty equal to others of same rank and experience.                                                                                                  |               | -<br>-<br>-<br>-                |  |
| NOB <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                        | <input type="checkbox"/>        |            | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |               | <input type="checkbox"/>        |  |
| 40. I recommend screening this individual for next career milestone(s) as follows: (maximum of two)<br>Recommendations may be for competitive schools or duty assignments such as: LCPO, DEPT CPO, SEA, CMC, CWO, LDO, Dept Head, XO, OIC, CO, Major Command, War College, PG School. |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                        |                                 |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |                                 |  |
| 41. COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE. * All 1.0 marks, three 2.0 marks, and 2.0 marks in Block 34 must be specifically substantiated in comments. Comments must be verifiable. Font must be 10 or 12 pitch (10 to 12 point) only. Use upper and lower case.                                    |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                        |                                 |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |                                 |  |
| <b>Promotion Recommendation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | NOB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Significant Problems   | Progressing                     | Promotable | Must Promote                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Early Promote | 44. Reporting Senior Address    |  |
| 42. INDIVIDUAL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                        |                                 |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |                                 |  |
| 43. SUMMARY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                        |                                 |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |                                 |  |
| 45. Signature of Reporting Senior                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                        |                                 |            | 46. Signature of individual evaluated. "I have seen this report, been apprised of my performance, and understand my right to make a statement."                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |                                 |  |
| Date:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                        |                                 |            | I intend to submit a statement <input type="checkbox"/> do not intend to submit a statement <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |               |                                 |  |
| Member Trait Average:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Summary Group Average: |                                 |            | Date:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |               |                                 |  |
| 47. Typed name, grade, command, UIC, and signature of Regular Reporting Senior on Concurrent Report                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                        |                                 |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |                                 |  |
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NAVPERS 1610/2 (Rev. 3-02)

## APPENDIX K: USMC FITNESS REPORT

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
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| <b>DRAFT COPY</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
| 1. Marine Reported On:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 2. Occasion and Period Covered: |                          |                          |                          |
| a. Last Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | b. First Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | c. MI                           | d. SSN                   | a. OCC                   | b. From To               |
| DOE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | JOHN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | A                               | 123456789                | AN                       | 20030601 20040531        |
| <b>G. INTELLECT AND WISDOM</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
| 1. PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION (PME). Commitment to intellectual growth in ways beneficial to the Marine Corps. Increases the breadth and depth of warfighting and leadership aptitude. Resources include resident schools; professional qualifications and certification processes; nonresident and other extension courses; civilian educational institution coursework; a personal reading program that includes (but is not limited to) selections from the Commandant's Reading List; participation in discussion groups and military societies; and involvement in learning through new technologies. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
| ADV                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Maintains currency in required military skills and related developments. Has completed or is enrolled in appropriate level of PME for grade and level of experience. Recognizes and understands new and creative approaches to service issues. Remains abreast of contemporary concepts and issues. | PME outlook extends beyond MOS and required education. Develops and follows a comprehensive personal program which includes broadened professional reading and/or academic course work; advances new concepts and ideas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Dedicated to life-long learning. As a result of active and continuous efforts, widely recognized as an intellectual leader in professionally related topics. Makes time for study and takes advantage of all resources and programs. Introduces new and creative approaches to services issues. Engages in a broad spectrum of forums and dialogues.                                 |                                 |                          |                          | N/O                      |
| A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | B                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | C                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | D                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | E                               | F                        | G                        | H                        |
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| 2. DECISION MAKING ABILITY. Viable and timely problem solution. Contributing elements are judgment and decisiveness. Decisions reflect the balance between an optimal solution and a satisfactory, workable solution that generates tempo. Decisions are made within the context of the commander's established intent and the goal of mission accomplishment. Anticipation, mental agility, intuition, and success are inherent.                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
| ADV                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Makes sound decisions leading to mission accomplishment. Actively collects and evaluates information and weighs alternatives to achieve timely results. Confidently approaches problems; accepts responsibility for outcomes.                                                                       | Demonstrates mental agility; effectively prioritizes and solves multiple complex problems. Analytical abilities enhanced by experience, education, and intuition. Anticipates problems and implements viable, long-term solutions. Steadfast, willing to make difficult decisions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Widely recognized and sought after to resolve the most critical, complex problems. Seldom matched analytical and intuitive abilities; accurately foresees unexpected problems and arrives at well-timed decisions despite fog and friction. Completely confident approach to all problems. Masterfully strikes a balance between the desire for perfect knowledge and greater tempo. |                                 |                          |                          | N/O                      |
| A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | B                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | C                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | D                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | E                               | F                        | G                        | H                        |
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| 3. JUDGMENT. The discretionary aspect of decision making. Draws on core values, knowledge, and personal experience to make wise choices. Comprehends the consequences of contemplated courses of action.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
| ADV                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Majority of judgments are measured, circumspect, relevant and correct.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Decisions are consistent and uniformly correct, tempered by consideration of their consequences. Able to identify, isolate and assess relevant factors in the decision making process. Opinions sought by others. Subordinates personal interest in favor of impartiality.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Decisions reflect exceptional insight and wisdom beyond this Marine's experience. Counsel sought by all; often an arbiter. Consistent, superior judgment inspires the confidence of seniors.                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                 |                          |                          | N/O                      |
| A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | B                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | C                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | D                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | E                               | F                        | G                        | H                        |
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| JUSTIFICATION:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
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| <b>H. FULFILLMENT OF EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
| 1. EVALUATIONS. The extent to which this officer serving as a reporting official conducted, or required others to conduct, accurate, uninflated, and timely evaluations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
| ADV                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Occasionally submitted untimely or administratively incorrect evaluations. As RS, submitted one or more reports that contained inflated markings. As RO, concurred with one or more reports from subordinates that were returned by HQMC for inflated marking.                                      | Prepared uninflated evaluations which were consistently submitted on time. Evaluations accurately described performance and character. Evaluations contained no inflated markings. No reports returned by RO or HQMC for inflated marking. No subordinates' reports returned by HQMC for inflated marking. Few, if any, reports were returned by RO or HQMC for administrative errors. Section Cs were void of superlatives. Justifications were specific, verifiable, substantive, and where possible, quantifiable and supported the markings given. | No reports submitted late. No reports returned by either RO or HQMC for administrative correction or inflated markings. No subordinates' reports returned by HQMC for administrative correction or inflated markings. Returned procedurally or administratively incorrect reports to subordinates for correction. As RO nonconcurred with all inflated reports.                      |                                 |                          |                          | N/O                      |
| A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | B                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | C                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | D                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | E                               | F                        | G                        | H                        |
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| JUSTIFICATION:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |
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| NAVMC 10835D (Rev. 1-01) (WN 3.1) <span style="float: right;">PAGE 4 OF 5</span>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                          |                          |                          |

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## **APPENDIX L: WHAT TYPES OF DECISIONS DO MIDSHIPMEN GET TO MAKE? (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

(Non-1/C) mostly make simple decisions about time management issues--do I do my homework, workout, go on liberty, sleep, etc.

Most midshipmen's biggest "pressure" decisions probably occur when faced with whether or not to break a regulation (underage drinking, usurping privileges, etc).

The entire spectrum of decision making is covered here...That includes life long decisions like service selection all the way down to correcting a shipmate for having his book bag slung over his shoulder.

We don't need to spend a lot of effort on teaching them how to balance their own budget or do their laundry, etc. We need to engage their minds in solving the problems they will face in combat situations.

They make numerous decisions every day, e.g. Do they say anything to their peers or subordinates about violations of Mid Regs/Uniform Regs/Conduct Unbecoming that they witness? Do they decide to do the right thing? Do they decide to work a little harder vice cutting a corner?

We don't even trust them to wear a coat if it is cold out, that has to be dictated to them. Plebe Summer was ridiculous. There had to be Officer/Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL) presence every waking moment to ensure the detailers weren't screwing up. We didn't ever give them the opportunity to make a decision about what was/wasn't the right thing to do, because we had to be standing over them the entire time. I think this weakened them horribly in their capacity to make good decisions... The way we do business is crippling (them)... We are too afraid of taking the responsibility if they do screw up.

It differs from company to company, battalion to battalion, and class to class.

The only aspect that is advertised as "for the midshipmen and by the midshipmen" is the Honor process. Otherwise, every aspect of their lives is governed by regulations.

The biggest one they make on a daily basis would involve Conduct. Whether or not to obey a rule or whether or not it is worth it to hold a shipmate accountable.

Very low impact decisions for the most part.

Primarily ones that the consequences only have impact on themselves.

My company commander owns and runs the company, making every decision. If it is something I have to decide, I make him decide and give me the justification--I have only overruled him once or twice (based on experience, not his judgment).

Strippers get thrust into a more officer-like position where they make decisions which affect the rest of their unit.

Midshipmen make very few important FINAL decisions that impact others. Often their decisions are truly recommendations to others, unless the decision only impacts them.

Depends on the billet and depends on the attitude. We tend to put the good ones in important billets...others can and do avoid these situations. The key is forcing them into billets where decisions will be made, and supervising the decisions they make...In many ways, the bad ones need this experience the most.

(Midshipmen) make lots of decisions on ball fields.

Varsity captains learn to make decisions under pressure.

Most practical application occurs during summer training blocks.

## **APPENDIX M: WHAT TYPES OF DECISIONS DO MIDSHIPMEN GET TO MAKE? (MIDSHIPMEN RESPONSES)**

### **1. Striper/Non-Athletes**

There are a lot of priority decisions to make...and a lot of them involve whether or not to work on academics or do something else.

As far as military leadership...I would say that as a general rule midshipmen get to make very few decisions. Mostly (our) hands are tied, (we) have to talk to (our) company officer. I was a company commander, and as far as giving out "overnights" to people who had done stuff well, or enacting some kind of company policy or something like that, stuff that demonstrated our leadership, my hands, as far as being a leader, were completely tied by the company officer.

(We are only) able to make decisions within a box that's been created for us, but even the company officers don't have the ability to make decisions. When it comes right down to it, everything has to be blessed by the signature of the Commandant, and from there down I see a box has been set, and then there's no leeway. You can't go outside that box without permission from the Commandant. Even the battalion officers are kind of tied up by the fact that they need to get approval from the Commandant to do things.

Pretty much the only decisions that midshipmen get to make are those most directly affecting their own personal lives, and so I would go on the disappointed side of the Academy, in terms of (midshipmen) are not really given a chance to see any kind of consequences other than their own personal decisions.

We're kind of guided into what decisions we need to be making without actually taking the time to think about it, (and) saying "this is what I want and this is when I want it," and then seeing the consequences of that decision. Many times I make a decision and I am stopped by my company officer before I get to see the consequences of it because "we are not allowed to do that."

As a company commander...my company officer allows me to make a lot of decisions. As long as I can come to him with some justification for why I want to do a particular thing, he'll let me try it, and he'll let me take it through its course to see what happens... but a lot of it depends, I guess, on the company officer, because I was given a lot of rein, as long as I had a coherent, logical thought process about why I wanted to take a particular course of action, my company officer would let me do it.

I believe that, also as a company commander, I was given a lot of rein to make decisions. I think I was making more decisions than other company commanders because our company officer really stood back and let me do it.

(As a company commander,) I think the majority of the job was just implementing other people's decisions from higher up, just implementing their policies and making things happen that way, and not (much) critical decision making.

(As a regimental adjutant, I was) mostly implementing other people's policies, and really I didn't have the opportunity to, really, make many decisions and, they didn't have to with anything to do at the Naval Academy. I would say the majority of my decisions have been made while not at the Naval Academy. You know, on leave or on liberty or cruises, where we are given more leniency to make decisions, make good decisions, make bad decisions.

I'm prior enlisted, and I would say that as an E-4 in the Navy I had more control over what decisions I made than as a firstie officer candidate.

## **2. Athlete/Non-Stripers**

I think a lot of decisions we make as midshipmen are based on academics, especially when it comes to crunch time, 6-week exams, 12-week exams, you've got to weigh sometimes what's more important...so I think that midshipmen here don't make too many military decisions, but instead, they mostly make academic decisions.

As athletes...we have to balance...extra time that we want to spend on a sport...(with some sports) there's a lot of opportunity to put in extra work after practice, and you have to decide what's more important...your position on the team or your academic standing.

A lot of times one of the first big decisions people make when they come here is whether to continue the sport that they've done pretty much their entire lives...they have to decide whether they want to continue with it, or whether they want to just focus on academics. And that continues on, all four years, and I think the decision becomes harder and harder.

Another decision is how involved (we) are going to be, within the brigade.

## **3. Non-striper/Non-athletes**

One of the biggest decisions I have to make on a regular basis was what to give people as punishment, as the (company) Conduct officer. That was pretty intense and important, because, how much do you want to make someone suffer for what they did?

This year I was a squad leader, so I had to make decisions like how to run the squad...the attitude to have at tables, kind of small (decisions), but important too. The previous time, before firstie year, I wasn't forced to make any real decisions. I wasn't in charge of much, I was the platoon sergeant last year, but ...previous to this year, there weren't many decisions to make.

The average midshipman doesn't make a whole lot of professional or personal decisions that aren't already kind of predetermined as to what the right decision would be. There is an atmosphere or an indication that we are making the decisions by ourselves, but in reality, if it doesn't come inside of the decision that someone higher up has already made, then it's the wrong decision.

(As the company Conduct officer,) I got to make the decision (about the punishment to assign), but when the one of the company officers or the senior enlisted leaders saw whatever I chose to give them and didn't like it, then the decision was wrong. I had to make all my decisions based on the guidelines that they wanted. So my decision wasn't really my decision. It was more a matter of, "here's a list of things, here's the problem, (now) match them up." So leeway is very, very tight.

(Whenever we make a decision,) we still need to go check with someone, we don't want to be the top person holding the responsibility...instead of us making decisions about what we feel is right, we try to make decisions that we think other people feel is right, or what they are saying is correct.

For the most part, any kind of leadership you have over anyone else almost falls under management, because they put so much structure around it... they have set up so many things already, the structure, that it kind of hinders your creativity, or your leadership skills, instead of fostering them.

I spent a lot of time on CSNTS, being a skipper, (and) I felt like...there were real decisions that affected (others), like we are crossing a channel and there's this shipping bearing down on us, strong winds, almost gale force, lightning all around, it's dark, you can't see the buoys, you are trying not to hit anything...and I had officers on board...who would just quietly watch me. I've got a youngster crew that's scared, so I have to calm them down and keep the ship straight. So I think on that cruise there was a lot of decision making, where there were actually consequences, where people could get hurt and bad things could happen.

I also think there are moral decisions. How many times have we seen someone do something that doesn't meet the standard, and (we) have to decide whether or not (we) are going to say anything, and all too often

midshipmen let stuff go by because they don't want to be that guy who calls someone out.

There's a lot of micromanagement at the company officer level, I feel. It's supposed to be the firstie leadership positions (that) run their company the way they want to run it, and the company officer should just be in a supervisor role and not be making decisions for them, and I guess that's the main thing that has bothered me over my 4 years here.

I agree that on summer training we get to do some more realistic decisions, but as far as the ones they let us do in (Bancroft) Hall, I think a lot of them are minute and childish and they don't give us enough chance to really try to grow as leaders, as far as decision making, and really feel the repercussions.

## **APPENDIX N: HOW OFTEN, IF EVER, DO MIDSHIPMEN HAVE TO MAKE "GUT-WRENCHING" DECISIONS RELATED TO THEIR LEADERSHIP POSITION? WITH WHAT TYPE OF "GUT-WRENCHING" DECISIONS ARE THEY FACED? (MIDSHIPMEN RESPONSES)**

### **1. Striper/Non-athletes**

The only really gut-wrenching decisions that I've observed are decisions that pertained to the Honor concept, and observing violations and how you may or may not turn someone in for what might be an honor violation. Or, it goes to Conduct, too, to a lesser degree, and I think the reason they are difficult or gut-wrenching decisions is because there is an underlying mistrust of the Conduct system and the Honor system at the Academy. I think that if people trusted the system, they would be more willing to put forth cases, knowing that the outcome would be the right outcome, and that it would be a reasonable outcome, but since midshipmen don't really trust the Conduct and Honor system, it becomes a gut-wrenching decision because our inclination is to take care of it ourselves, without going to the officer chain of command, if we can. Because once we put it on the Honor or on the Conduct side of the house, it is now out of our hands, and we have to have faith in the system, and I think we've lost our faith. That's really the only gut-wrenching decisions that I can think of at the Academy.

The big stuff just flies right over us. So probably no gut-wrenching decisions I've had to make.

One exception...and that's sitting on Aptitude boards. Or when midshipmen get a chance to sit on an Honor board. I think that those are pretty much the only chances...where you actually see a midshipman making a decision with some consequence...But, I also believe...that if it hadn't gone the way the highest ranking officer on the board wanted it to, it would be overridden.

Last week I was in a Conduct hearing with the Commandant for two 3/C midshipmen who were put up for separation, and I think I kind of went through the process of thinking about what I was going to say, when they went to the chain of command, and how that was going to affect whether or not they were going to stay here, and I think the conclusion I came to was, it didn't really matter what I was going to say, the Commandant was going to do what the Commandant was going to do, based on more of what my senior enlisted and company officer had to say than particularly what I had to say, so I think that's an example of where we don't really get to have much of a say in what actually happens.

I think a lot of it also depends on the position you have within the brigade. As company commander...I've gotten to handle a lot of the minor offenses, and have (had) to pay a high price with (my) peers...Now, in some other companies, the company officer might say, "this is what they are getting and that's it," but I was given the ability to assign the punishment that I thought fit, as long as I had some reasonable justification to support them. I think in that sense that is the closest I've ever come to anything I would even remotely consider to be gut-wrenching, to look someone in the eye and have to decide what that punishment is.

A part of (the fact that midshipmen do not make have to make difficult decisions) is based on the way our lives are here, the fact that for the most part, we really don't have to do much thinking, and our days are pretty much planned out from start to finish.

I've stood watch with officers who will not make a decision on their own, but will execute the "letter of the law" for every specific decision, if you can call it a decision...they are not making a decision, they are an automaton, simply looking up regulations. There's no such thing as the "spirit of the law." I've had them say..."I don't want to do this, but that's the regulation--I have to," and to me, that's just, number one, it's the most disgusting form of leadership I've ever seen, and number two, that's what happens when you are not taught what responsibility is and what decision making is.

## **2. Athlete/Non-strippers**

I think that that depends particularly on leadership responsibilities. I am sure that the Honor Chair faces, probably, one or two (gut-wrenching decisions) a day because (of) the decisions that Honor Boards make.

I am not personally faced with these kinds of decisions too much, just as a platoon commander. The worst thing I have to worry about is, maybe somebody marching a couple of tours because they didn't make it to formation.

CDO is a pretty stressful job on Saturday night. They have to make decisions about what to do about situations that develop on deck. That's probably a good opportunity for making gut-wrenching decisions.

I would have to say that the majority of my gut-wrenching decisions have been away from (Bancroft) Hall...personal ones.

If you witness an Honor offense that is done by a friend of yours...what do you do? I mean, obviously, there is the "letter of the law"--what you *should* do--versus not bilging a shipmate, which is pounded into your head from day one.

### **3. Non-striper/Non-athletes**

I don't think any real gut-wrenching decisions are made at the leadership level. I think we only make them at the personal level, like service selection, (or) like (if) you're in trouble with a bunch of guys, there's going to be pressure on you to turn in your friends, stuff like that...such as loyalty...I think that's the most gut-wrenching stuff.

I haven't really had to make any gut-wrenching decisions in my leadership positions. I've had to make--I don't know about gut-wrenching--but pretty tough decisions...while standing watch, as far as holding people accountable when they don't show up on time, or if they go out and they are drinking and come back late.

I think that (sitting on an Honor Board) is probably the only time that midshipmen, in any way, will make a gut-wrenching decision, because in every other circumstance...(any decision that affects others) will either be approved or disapproved by the company officer...But the Honor Concept is truly midshipmen-run.

Looking back, I don't think I've ever really had a gut-wrenching decision.

I was a company XO this (past) summer for Plebe Summer, and we faced something that could have been a gut-wrenching decision. We had a plebe that really wasn't cutting it in any facet, in any way, shape or form, and we thought we would have the power, or capability to send her to a higher level to be considered to leave this place, but after the first couple of steps, we were told, "it's not your choice." I mean, it doesn't matter that even though you are the one leading her, you are the one training her, the Admissions Board has said that she is capable of getting through here, so it's not your business. They took the gut-wrenching decision from us...when the time came...to make the decision of leadership, it was taken (from us). We were informed that it was not our decision.

I think a lot of the gut-wrenching decisions have to do with frying somebody...I think especially it becomes apparent when you are a firstie and you are dealing with your classmates, and the problem is, they are all your friends, right? But you've got a job to do, so...you just have to find that fine line.

I think during finals, during finals week, and right before papers are due, people feel tempted to cheat, to take the easy way out, to pretty much make their life easier. I think that's a gut-wrenching decision a lot of people make.

I think once you get in a situation where you are confronted with what you've done, like maybe a Conduct offense you've committed, and it's time to 'fess up, and maybe there (are) parts that you just don't want to

mention, that maybe nobody will find out, or trying to cover somebody up because someone else will get in trouble, so not mention it. Do you tell the whole truth, or do you just take that chance?...it doesn't make it easier just to leave some parts out because it's a lie of omission and you want to be accountable, ...it's kind of gut-wrenching...do you hurt your friends or...(do you uphold your) personal honor?

I have never seen (officers) make a gut-wrenching decision away from what the rules are...so that's the example we are seeing here. Pick up the book, read the book...there's your gut-wrenching decision process right there...It's a cop out.

The Academy as a whole seems to think there's a lack of a gray area...(but) there (are) always gray areas. We try to make things so black and white here, I think it's a bad way for us to go about doing things, because there are certain circumstances where you shouldn't have to follow exactly the "letter of the law." There are extenuating circumstances, and we try to pretend there are not, and I don't agree with that...I don't see why we do it that way. (They) pretty much (remove judgment from the equation).

## **APPENDIX O: AN OFFICER MUST BE ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS UNDER TIME PRESSURE AND UNCERTAINTY (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

This is a given. Hence the reason for the institution (i.e. develop them morally, mentally, and physically so they can make the correct decision).

I agree strongly but he or she must also know what decisions can wait. Everything at USNA is labeled “important and urgent.” (As an officer,) you have to weed out the real important and urgent things.

This defines one of the basic responsibilities of officers.

Get the plans for the (Marine Corps) OCS leadership reaction course and build it on Hospital Point. That’s one tangible tool for teaching this.

Officers must be able to analyze the situation and make an appropriate decision in a short span of time. While the initial decision may not be the perfect solution, a decision and course of action now is normally far better than the perfect solution later.

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## **APPENDIX P: THE TYPES OF DECISIONS MIDSHIPMEN MAKE PREPARE THEM FOR THE TYPES OF DECISIONS THEY WILL MAKE AS OFFICERS (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

It doesn't matter. Any decision they make is a good one...I think any decision they make is helping them learn.

Good decision making does not automatically happen in May [commissioning]. It is a process that takes time. Some may only need plebe summer to know how to make good decisions while others need all four years.

Some don't understand that failing to pay attention to minor stuff trains the mind to fail to pay attention to the big things later.

We don't even allow them to make decisions about paying for a haircut or taking out the trash, much less anything that is truly important. I think graduation is a real eye opener for the kind of...decisions they will have to make.

While we stress the importance of this "crucial" aspect of midshipmen development, we often undermine this effort by "spoon feeding" midshipmen. Many decisions that require significant thought are often made FOR midshipmen instead of BY midshipmen...often important decision-making processes...are DICTATED TO midshipmen by the officers/SELs instead of the midshipmen chain of command.

The large decisions are made by commissioned officers and Senior Enlisted Leaders. Anything of consequence is taken from midshipmen.

Midshipmen lead a sheltered life compared to what they will experience upon graduation. The system makes a lot of decisions for them, that although are minor, would be a way for them to take more responsibility for themselves and make decisions that affect them.

Many seem to feel that they can just "turn on" the officer-like qualities once they leave...and (they) figure they'll be good officers once they leave. Trying to dispel the myth that people change once they leave is one of a (company officer's) hardest jobs.

The scope and magnitude of the decisions (midshipmen make) pale in comparison with choices in the Fleet.

We don't give them enough leeway to screw-up and learn from their mistakes. USNA is a zero tolerance command in every aspect of their lives.

Not so sure the “type” of decision is the same, but making any decision, and executing it, is good preparation for the Fleet.

(I) say over and over, we need to place (midshipmen) into situations where they are allowed to make decisions. I try and do that with my own (billet holders). I even let bad decisions be made. But we are so concerned with getting everything right the first time that company officers just tend to pass on the word about what should be done, rather than watching something play out. The midshipmen then carry out their orders, vice allowing them to make a call. If you are not careful, the officer will just tend to make decisions for the midshipmen, and (midshipmen) are simply passing word or executing orders.

(Midshipmen) most often execute what the commissioned officers order. We don’t really let them develop their skills. Often, the midshipmen operate in an environment of fear of punishment for making the “wrong” choice.

## **APPENDIX Q: DO MIDSHIPMEN HAVE ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE DECISIONS? (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

(The Naval Academy's) curriculum limits (decision-making) opportunities. At West Point, they bring all 4,000 cadets back from Christmas leave a week early and do what they call a military intercessional. They focus solely on solving combat scenarios (using computer simulations and field exercises)....We could do this, too. We could put YPs in the water and use the new facilities in Luce to simulate "fleet battle problems."

Only the stripers do, but it's generally under a lot of oversight and I believe the Administration is very resistant to allowing them to make mistakes (and thereby learn from their mistakes). We micromanage the midshipmen way too much.

Yes, they do but midshipmen would prefer to believe that company officers, senior enlisted leaders, the battalion officers and Commandant make all the decisions for them because of Midshipmen Regulations (Mid Regs).

A very limited number (such as the company and battalion commanders) may get to make "real" decisions that impact others, primarily because we hold so much power/decision-making ability at upper levels.

Yes and no. The greatest limits are their maturity level and the culture within the brigade that characterizes certain actions. Most mids are unwilling to make a hard choice that might characterize them as a "Joe" or a "Yes man." So there are adequate opportunities, the question is do mids take them?

Mid Regs (are) too huge to possibly know and enforce. Instead of leadership, there is a cookbook approach to how the brigade stripers run things...The striper duties are mapped out to be excessively rigid.

Much of their life is structured, however, midshipmen have incredibly wide latitude in making decisions. They usually forego the opportunity to do so, however, out of laziness or their favorite: cynicism.

They have plenty of opportunities. Sometimes this decision making is hampered by a perception of micromanagement by the officer chain of command. While this perception has some truth and merit, the opportunities afforded remain adequate.

I believe that they do not have adequate opportunities. They are limited by the constant and persistent presence of officers. They are painfully aware that they have a safety net, and therefore don't put the time and energy into decision-making that they should.

## **APPENDIX R: DO MIDSHIPMEN HAVE ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE DECISIONS? (MIDSHIPMEN RESPONSES)**

### **1. Striper/Non-athletes**

Sometimes (when) Conduct is involved in a situation, the squad leader has to speak on a subordinate's behalf, maybe at an adjudication...(and) you've got a lot of pressure coming from the company officer (about) what you are supposed to say about (your) subordinates... I think company officers sometimes step in and tailor our decisions, and not let a person decide on their own.

I think we have ample opportunity to make... decisions every day, within (a) created structure. And I think that also reflects the Fleet, because as we move out in the Fleet as junior officers, we are going to be making decisions within a confining box that has been set up by our superiors. And so in that sense, I think that this place really does prepare (us) to make decisions.

I don't think we make any substantial decisions. I can't decide that tomorrow we are not going to have formation or something like that. But after doing a Fleet cruise this summer, it's not like the ensigns or the LTJGs who are at their squadron...they didn't make substantial decisions. They still led within their divisions, but it was mostly through personal example. So I guess that's kind of what's to be expected, I mean, I don't expect make sweeping changes on a daily basis, but if you can get accustomed to making the small decisions that matter on a personal level to the small groups you are interacting with, then I think that's probably the best lesson you can take away from this place.

Sometimes I'll give someone permission that I cannot technically give them, but I'll authorize them to do it, knowing that if they get caught, I'll get hammered for it, but I've got the risk to take.

You can put chimpanzees through the Naval Academy...and as long as you don't deviate too far from the standard, you really don't need to make any decisions, you just conform with what we've been presented with.

I think the problem is that there's too much red tape in everything that happens around here... and it just becomes an environment where nobody really wants to go outside the rules, because there are so many rules, and it's just like you've got a robot, going through daily activities, and no one actually makes...decisions and sees the consequences of them.

This isn't just limited to midshipmen...teachers aren't given a decision whether or not they want to give a final exam.

What we see as midshipmen a lot of times is that people are afraid to make decisions because of the consequences that would happen if they made the wrong ones. And...I am talking about the senior leadership, whether it's in the faculty, or officers...they are afraid of having to answer to (higher)...to go outside the box and do something that they think is right, that they can justify in their own minds...That is the kind of the example we are shown, the model we are going to follow: "Oops, I can't make a decision, I've got to check with the guy in front of me."

Something I find kind of interesting is that they want us to make decisions and they want us to be accountable for those decisions, and yet the fact that we are so restricted in what we can do almost contradicts that.

As many decisions as they can remove, they will remove. That's my understanding after four years here.

## **2. Athlete/Non-strippers**

I don't know if there are any...decisions we have to make, anything that really forces us to analyze how to go through this, makes us go through the decision-making process, or if we just sit down and make (the decision) according to a policy they have already seen.

I think (there is a) very minimal amount of decision-making opportunities because I think that...the people who are in charge of the Academy are too afraid for a midshipman make a mistake, and have them learn from it, because if they make that mistake, then they might make the Academy look bad in the eyes of the public, and then they are going to have to do all this explaining. But I think it would be good for midshipmen to make mistakes and make the decisions, do it here, under this...environment where people's lives won't be at stake, instead of making bad decisions when they get out to the Fleet...(and) I think that's bad because this is the perfect place for us to actually be in charge...so if you are a company commander you are making decisions instead of having the company officer standing there saying, "no, don't do that." I feel like the company officer should be there to guide them after they have made their mistake, and show them maybe where they saw that they went wrong.

Our decisions are usually to follow what has been imposed us or not to, because almost every aspect of our lives has some kind of policy or regulation dictated what the proper way is...I think there are some aspects that (this is) good...because when you get out to the Fleet, you are going to have to be dealing with policies that are scripted and already imposed.

They've pretty much eliminated a lot of gray area with Mid Regs and things like that, and I think that takes away (from decision-making opportunities).

They began this semester by taking a lot of things out of the 1/C's hands...and even when we stepped up, we lost the opportunities to make some decisions and create some of our own policies, and we want to practice...this should be our time to practice making decisions, but it appears that they think that midshipmen in the past haven't been able to handle it, so the next class has it taken out of their hands.

They should give midshipmen as much control as possible, and then...we'll make mistakes now, but we'll also learn the lessons, (and) maybe look closer at the consequences than if we hadn't (tried and failed).

We should definitely get a chance to make our mistakes and learn. I mean this is a learning institution, but I think that a lot of officers have forgotten about that, but we are here to learn and mistakes and...just because you make a mistake doesn't mean down and out. But if you make a mistake it seems like you are done for the rest of the time you are here... We need to learn (from our mistakes), and I don't think we are given a chance to do that.

### **3. Non-striper/Non-athletes**

I would definitely say "no" in almost every aspect because from the most menial little task to a big decision, the decision has already been made, and you are pretty much told what it is.

I think that what limits it is really a lack of trust from the officers to midshipmen.

I think there's a lack of trust. I mean, you talk to everyone around here and we say we "run the brigade." I'm not sure how true that is...we try to run something, but as soon as we come up with a decision that might be even slightly contrary to the norm or contrary to what a company officer or a battalion officer might want, well, our decision gets nixed.

I'd say absolutely not, and my inability to make decisions has turned me into an extremely pessimistic person about the Academy...The micromanagement from the officers down on the midshipmen is incredible. We really don't have the ability to make decisions.

The first-class year they will tell you, "you are going to be a junior officer, we are going to treat you like a junior officer," but that's not what happens. We are given the same privileges, rights, and decision-making opportunities as a plebe.

I think the administration handcuffs people with the regulations.

The more structure you have, the less decisions you have to make.

I think we are all forced to make decisions every day, the opportunity is there, it's just that you have to take it.

## **APPENDIX S: SUFFICIENT TIME AND RESOURCES ARE DEVOTED TO DEVELOPING DECISION-MAKING SKILLS IN MIDSHIPMEN AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

I think we miss the mark as a staff. We want to talk about honor and character, and we do...a lot, but we miss the discussion of how to make a decision. All of a midshipman's problems are the result of bad decisions, not bad luck.

Absolutely not. We spend a lot of time in the academic setting developing every midshipman's critical thinking skills, but we hardly ever create scenarios where they can utilize them to solve problems related to their future military duties.

Right now they are starting "decision making analysis training" but that is centered around sexual assault prevention. Not that that isn't important, but it is one issue of many that needs to be addressed.

Every day is filled with opportunities for midshipmen to actively make decisions...however, it must be used appropriately. As they are still developing, they will make novice mistakes. We must accept the risk associated with these mistakes and incorporate them into the decision-making process. If they are not given the opportunity to try, we are not developing their decision-making abilities. Instead, we are merely exercising their ability to follow orders within strict guidelines.

Midshipmen receive the most amount of time and attention from COs and SELs regarding decision-making when they are in a leadership position and have a lot of interaction with the officers and SELs. Otherwise, midshipmen may receive very little decision-making training prior to graduation.

The framework for decision making exists within the chain of command for the brigade, however, the brigade consistently demonstrates that they are unwilling to make some of the easy decisions...

The resources are present but there is minimal time and attention devoted to developing this skill.

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## **APPENDIX T: THE NAVAL ACADEMY ADEQUATELY PREPARES MIDSHIPMEN TO BE EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKERS AS OFFICERS (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

I'll agree, because we obviously have been graduating great officers for over 150 years. I think this can improve, however. Adequately, yes, but not much more. Most of the learning occurs (on-the-job).

The rigors of the overall system may prepare them due to the time constraints on a Mids time, but I don't feel that we actively go after decision making.

Adequately is the key word: Yes, we *adequately* prepare midshipmen in a lot of categories, but should that be our benchmark?

Often times, junior (officers) at USNA are forced to impose strict guidelines instead of allowing for active midshipmen growth. It differs from company to company and from battalion to battalion, largely in part by the mentality of the officers in charge.

The more opportunities the midshipmen have to autonomously run their companies within the regulations, the more opportunities they have to develop. The more they have their lives dictated and their actions strictly regulated by outside forces, the less development they have as decision makers.

There is too much pressure, placed on Battalion Officers, Company Officers, and Senior Enlisted Leaders to avoid mistakes. Therefore, many decisions are taken away from midshipmen. In these cases, midshipmen are "guided." Additionally, many of the civilians on the yard go through the Company Officer / SEL chain rather than the midshipman (chain-of-command). This forces Company Officers and SELs to take actions best left to midshipmen.

Midshipmen don't have much time that isn't scheduled...Therefore, they don't put much time into considering decisions. They make quick decisions and pray for the best. When things turn out poorly, they punt and look to the Company Officers and SELs for assistance.

I feel I was better prepared having gone through the USNA process...due to the increased number of decisions a (Naval Academy) midshipman is forced to make as compared to ROTC or other...programs.

I believe that the midshipmen are badly micromanaged at USNA...(which is) a clear sign to them that they are not trusted by the leadership to grow and learn...Midshipmen should be allowed more responsibility in general, and should be allowed to make the decisions that affect the brigade. Only

then will they truly understand the concepts of accountability and responsibility.

## **APPENDIX U: RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO GIVE MIDSHIPMEN MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO PREPARE TO BE DECISION MAKERS AS OFFICERS (COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSES)**

We have too many rules in the Conduct system, and the only choices are major or minor. I know (this) is under review. I recommend a more graduated scale and fewer rules. This places the onus of decision making squarely on the individual mid. A more graduated scale also allows more midshipmen to handle less serious problems on a lower level.

Give them more control, but hold them accountable when they make bad decisions. That would require the institution to do a few things: 1) Communicate with the midshipmen, not the staff; 2) Be willing to allow more time for things to occur; 3) Be willing to accept error/failure along the way; and 4) Have a consistent process for addressing failure/bad decision making. We don't have a lot of that right now.

1) Establish a leadership reaction course on Hospital Point or at the Naval Station; 2) Institute a military intercessional either between semesters or at the conclusion of the academic year.

More liberty, remove pre-paid services, remove trash services. Allow greater room for failure, but once certain lines (specific single action, numerous lesser offenses, or total demerits) are crossed, dismissal/separation is necessary to uphold the standards of the Brigade and Navy.

(The) officer staff needs to take several steps back and give them more rope. This is a training environment. If they make a mistake here, no one dies. It is a lesson learned so that they make the right decision later when the stakes are higher.

Give them the responsibility and the accountability for tasks (don't have the battalion/company officers listed as OIC, list the Battalion Commander for instance). Company officers should be mentoring the midshipmen, not running their programs for them.

Consistent and harsh punishment for extremely poor decision making (e.g. underage drinking, fake IDs, DUIs, Sexual misconduct). The lack of (this) contributes to continued poor decision making.

Expect mistakes and allow them to occur...Allow them to see the results of their bad decisions.

Don't do the work for them...Force the midshipmen to be involved, force the midshipmen to make decisions and take responsibility for (those decisions).

The only real way is to push the responsibility down...The problem with this is that we (the staff) have to be willing to accept the fact that mids are going to make BAD decisions, and in some cases we need to knowingly let them do that in order for them to learn...We need to change out mentality and be willing to absorb some risk as leaders ourselves.

I think that the shift in summer training to place all mids in a position of small unit leadership during their first class summer is a step in the right direction.

I like the 2/C Striper Shadow organization where, for every 1/C Striper position, there is a 2/C deputy or equivalent. Involving the 2/C more in Brigade operations would allow them to see the decision-making process at work before they had to attempt it themselves.

Why is it that every tasker is sent directly to Company Officers and not the midshipmen in charge? The answer is that civilian/military workers do not want to take the chance that the tasker will not be completed either quickly or correctly.

Allow the midshipmen to make difficult decisions that impact others, show them the difficulty of being consistent, and then hold them accountable for their decisions. Somehow we need to encourage the midshipmen to have confidence in their decisions as well.

I think (we) need to get midshipmen more involved in the Conduct system and letting them award levels of punishment.

As an institution we have to be willing to accept all the bad decisions made with good intentions along with the good (decisions). The more the midshipmen feel the true weight of responsibility, which comes from a sense of having the "final say so," the (richer) their decision making development will be.

We should also formalize decision training in our Professional Development courses. We put tremendous emphasis on academics and the institution's credibility as an academic powerhouse. I believe that we should put some of this energy into the development and judicious use of our Naval Science and Leadership course resources. Rather than these courses being academic in nature and geared largely toward human behavior, etc, we need to foster the actual professional development of midshipmen. One of the vital aspects of this education should be decision making.

Give the brigade back to the midshipmen. They should have the primary leadership and supervisory roles during Plebe Summer, with officers there only to provide a sanity check on actions, and ensure safety precautions are being adhered to, not to stifle creativity.

They need to be forced to make decisions, fail if necessary, and be held accountable for all that they AND their subordinates do and fail to do.

They need more leadership opportunities earlier in the midshipmen life vice waiting till their 1/C year to “cram” all their leadership practical application in then.

Use the Capstone classes during the second semester of 1/C year to focus on decisions that pertain to a specific warfare community.

1) Develop a Leadership Reaction Course at the Naval Station and use for Leadership classes and Plebes. Simple, practicable, and effective; and, 2) Less concern about Brigade-wide consistency. Within relatively broad guidelines, allow companies (which are the focus of leadership development) to enact policies and then learn to live with or adjust the consequences of those decisions.

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## **APPENDIX V: RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO GIVE MIDSHIPMEN MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO PREPARE TO BE DECISION MAKERS AS OFFICERS (MIDSHIPMEN RESPONSES)**

### **1. Striper/Non-athletes**

Make all the Battalion Officers O-4's instead of O-5's and O-6's...The O-5's that we have as battalion officers have all had command before...and they are used to being the chief. If they say it, it goes. And...because they are all used to that, and then they come to the Naval Academy, then all of a sudden they are reporting to an O-6, who is the boss, and everything really goes through him. And so they've gone from being commanders, and having a command, to "yeah, I've got 700 midshipmen under my control, but I really do absolutely nothing but try to make stuff up, try to look good." So, if you had O-4's instead, they would not have had a command as of yet, and I just think they'd be closer to the midshipmen also.

I really liked when my company officer would ask for my opinion, or maybe another midshipmen's opinion about what to do in a certain situation, before he expresses his own opinion. For example, like if someone in the company had a little trouble, and he asked the squad leader what he thinks should be done, what's next? And even if it's not the right decision that the squad leader has made, the squad leader expresses his opinion about what he thinks should be done, and it could be the right thing, and the company officer wants to follow through with that, or the company officer might believe it's really the wrong decision. I think that midshipmen can learn a little lesson that may pay off in the Fleet, whether the company officer agrees with it or not.

Leadership, in its most essential form, is based on trust and confidence. That's what the commission even says, "special trust and confidence" of the President, and they have absolutely none of that in midshipmen. Or even in their own officers, O-6's, people who have had command, and yet (are not allowed to) make a simple decision. It's the most awful example you can possibly imagine.

Leave a little bit more room for imperfection. For those people who make a mistake, have remediation.

I think that, in talking with other company commanders, that the more decision making you have is directly related to the trust your company officer puts in you...and how close he is. If he is there all the time micro-managing, you won't have any decisions to make. But if he trusts you and steps back, then you have more decisions to make...so I think the trust

issue is paramount. The Naval Academy really has to put trust in the midshipmen, in the chain of command that they select.

The officers need to trust the officers below them. Battalion officers need to trust their company officers to do the right thing, to make the right decisions, and they don't need to micro-manage the company officers. And if that happens, then the company officers can trust their company commanders.

My biggest observation is that people cannot bounce back from their mistakes. People who have some sort of Conduct violation here, it's pretty much the end of any type of leadership position they are going to get. It's hard to overcome a major Conduct violation. And no matter how sorry they might be, or how long ago it might have been, some people have a major in their Plebe year and they will never be able to hold any type of leadership position. To me, that just shows a lack of faith in that person's ability. That's one of the good things about remediation...it gives people a chance to come back, and to make some kind of improvement, and show that they're worth that. I mean...some of your best people, some of your best officers (are those) who have come back from a mistake.

I think the Naval Academy rewards the wrong type of behavior. Our company officer, last year, probably was the most micro-managing company officer in all 30 companies, and he got promoted (to a different job).

## **2. Athlete/Non-strippers**

I know that a lot of people wouldn't agree with it, but I think that we should get more military training during the year, instead of just during the summer, when we are actually with our companies, in our leadership positions and actually leading squads.

Leave the Company Officers out of the decision making as much as possible, and give the Firsties goals to meet. They might surprise people.

I think...people want the challenge of making a decision and creating a policy for other people to follow. I think we need the opportunities to get to fall on our face and get back up and correct ourselves.

I'd say the fear of getting into trouble is what actually keeps a lot of people from exercising their...abilities to make decisions.

## **3. Non-striper/Non-athletes**

A certain amount of leadership is, unfortunately, trial and error. You make a decision and you have to stick with it and have confidence in it, even if it's the wrong one, and then take responsibility for the consequences. Unfortunately this place doesn't do that. There's a decision

only if it's the right one...I think that if people were given the rope with which to hang themselves, you know it might pull tight, and it's going to hurt, but after a while you'd be your own person.

I (hear) they are going to change the whole professional system around, to where 2/C are squad leaders, have squad-leader type jobs, and let the firsties move onto higher, company-commander type jobs, and that's good, I think, because...firstie leadership (and) decision making didn't happen. (2/C squad leaders) will be good because it will give us a whole extra year of...leadership (and) decision making.

One of the things I'd like to change is the attitude the officers have towards us, like they feel like they can't trust us...get them to trust us more.

It seems like every time decision making is taken from us...they come up with a new rule (because) basically they think we can't make a decision on our own. Like wearing jackets to class or something like that...because of one isolated incident that they never want to see again...they completely change all the rules around to fit that.

You can't learn about decision making if you (are not allowed to) make bad decisions, (if) you're not allowed to screw up every once in a while. Like (one other midshipman) said, we need a little bit of rope to hang ourselves with.

If Mid Regs were reduced to half, and firsties were allowed to really make decisions without officers jumping in when they fall on their face the first time, then I think things would improve.

I would say you could improve the relationship between officers and mids by being a little more honest. You know, if you are not going to treat us like junior officers, then you probably shouldn't be saying you are going to treat us like junior officers.

We can start making decisions without having someone babysit us all the time. And if we can't be trusted to do that, then why are we even here anyway, because that's what this place is supposed to be about...developing leadership potential...and I think that...a lot of people come out of here crippled in a sense, because they have this inability to make a decision, they've had them made for so long for them, that they just can't (make a decision).

I think the Academy could do a better job of figuring out what decisions wouldn't be so drastic if they let us have control of it.

There are just a lot of decisions that I think could easily be made by the midshipmen and the midshipman chain of command that don't need to be left up to black & white typing on (the) pages of some USNA

instruction...And of course with that would also come (bad decisions, (and) if we make a bad decision, we get burned for it, and then we would learn from it *here*, from making a bad decision, instead of all of a sudden, "OK, you're commissioned, well now make all the decisions, and (we) hope you do them right...good luck."

It seems like from the administration on down...it's instilled in us...that everyone is afraid of getting burned. If you get burned, you're two steps behind already...they're afraid of failure...the structure's set up and you've just got to follow the structure, and you're just managing...you're just pushing them through the admin paper trail.

The easiest thing I can think of...is to restrict the ability of the senior enlisted and the company officers. I mean, I have a company officer that, in class last semester, he kept harping on that in our company it was so great he let the midshipmen officers take charge and lead the company...BS. He was in charge, he told the midshipmen officers what to do...which he continues to do today...

So just restrict their ability, or make it like it is on the sailing teams where you've got the officers there, an officer in charge...(but) they sit back and they watch you, and they stop you when you screw up. So, that allows you to learn, to screw up a little bit, it's not going to hurt anybody, and they can fix it, (and then) let you keep going.

Give the midshipmen a little bit more authority, and see what they do with it. It seems to me that the companies that run really well...(have a) company officer who actually listens to what the midshipmen say, and he is secure enough in his own leadership (to let them lead)... Most of the companies that run really well, I think, (are the ones in which) the company commanders have a bit more authority.

A lot of people that went out on cruises...met enlisted guys, (and) we'd sit around and talk sometimes and the perception of Academy grads isn't all that good a lot of time, and a lot of it stems from their unwillingness to make certain decisions.

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