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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

MORALITY IN COMBAT

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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2000

UMI Number: 9977952

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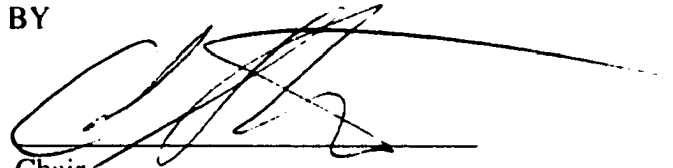
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Combat Morality

Morality in Combat

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY



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## Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the remarkable combat veterans who volunteered their time for this study and gave a portion of their lives for this nation's defense. Any work done on this study pales in comparison to such sacrifice.

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## Abstract

The factors that contribute to a military officer's moral and ethical decisions in combat are investigated with a qualitative study of interviews conducted with thirteen veterans. Theories of moral reasoning are discussed from philosophical and psychological standpoints and are then applied to the interview format. Data are then analyzed for patterns and these patterns are linked with those drawn from military and psychological literature. Three patterns demonstrate an officer's need for control over his environment, the responsibility he feels towards his men, and how the officer must live with his decisions post hoc.

## Moral Reasoning in Combat

### Introduction

Military ethics have become an essential, if not exceptional, ingredient in modern warfare. While this has not always been the case, there has been much thought in the last two millennia to clarify and refine what is acceptable in time of war. When morals in war are discussed, examples such as My Lai commonly come to mind. What about the more common moral decisions faced by combat leaders? My Lai was certainly not a typical example of what line leaders face in day-to-day combat.

Before exploring that issue, it is important at this juncture to delineate between the morality of war itself (i.e. whether going to war is defensible or not) and the laws that govern the conduct of war. The popular stance is that the laws of war are handed down by those who fight them, while the moral nature of war itself is deliberated by academicians, theologians, and statesmen (Wakin, 1979).

While the decision-making role of the aviator or ship's captain has been given due treatment in the literature (Orasanu & Backer, 1996), there is little to be said about the unique challenges waiting for the officer leading troops into ground combat. One of the first writers on combat stress, General S.L.A. Marshall, found that relatively few World War II soldiers fired their weapons due to the perception of stress (1947). In the example of My Lai, Company C was described as an "...edgy company, expecting a firefight and anxious to at last even the score for their comrades picked off by an invisible enemy" (Time, 1969). Hammer, in his book One Morning in the War (1970), notes that, by March 16, 1968, Charlie Company had been in the field nonstop for two and a half months. They had built

up a high level of frustration due to the “invisible” nature of their enemy on whom they were unable to extract revenge for their fallen comrades.

What it is like, then, for the officer leading troops into combat has not been researched. In particular, the moral decisions that the officer must face – and the manner in which those decisions are resolved – is an area that warrants study. One possible avenue of exploration might concern the influence the combat leader has in the moral nature of his subordinates. The officer in charge of combat troops often operates in isolation from higher-echelon units and may face complex moral issues in the field. How much guidance he is able to exert over his troops, however, is not fully understood.

Perhaps the search for common characteristics contributing to factors in moral reasoning might best be investigated through an analysis of what constitutes moral reasoning, morality, or ethical thought. Towards this end, what follows is a discussion of forces that have influenced and defined Western morals in philosophical, psychological, and martial/international arenas, presented in a chronological order of the research and scholarly literatures in each field. Through this, the reader may gain an appreciation for the interaction of influences that have led to the modern interpretations of combat morality.

### Literature Review

It would be a difficult task to discuss moral reasoning in the Western culture without discussing first some philosophical antecedents before moving into the psychological realm.

Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804)

In 1785, Immanuel Kant, by that time already a respected philosopher, finished writing his Foundations for the Metaphysics of Morals, which is regarded as one of the most important works on morals ever written (Moore & Bruder, 1990). In Foundations, Kant argues that an attempt to divine the moral right through emotional introspection is inefficient. He contended that reason is the only possible path to knowing what is right. Kant also drew a sharp line between reason and scientific investigation, saying that scientific investigation can only reveal how we are used to seeing things and relationships. The method of scientific investigations is unable to bring new experiences into being (Paton, 1936; Kant, 1785/1994a).

An example would be to imagine a fire that burns yet remains cool to the touch (Moore & Bruder, 1990). This is difficult for most to imagine, as we have no basis of experience to provide grounds for this concept. Scientific inquiry, at its best, could only show that such a fire has never existed before, not that it is inconceivable that it would ever exist. Experience provides a basis for our knowledge. However, once the mind understands its experiential base, it is no longer limited to experiential confines. While scientific inquiry can postulate that the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics have always held true, it cannot make the assertion that they always will (Paton, 1936).

Kant draws connections to the realm of moral thought. In the Foundations, Kant explains that moral principles hold without exception. This notion of universality will be important later. The test, then, for deciding to engage in one course of action over another is to determine if this particular course of action is one that he or she would condone for everyone in every

situation. According to Kant, then, the **supreme principle of morality** tells us that one is to act, “according to a maxim which can be adopted at the same time as a universal law” (Kant, 1785/1994a, p. 36, & Kant, 1785/1994b, p. 62). As these moral principles are meant to be followed by everyone and in every situation, then, they cannot be divined through scientific inquiry.

Two more Kantian terms are the **hypothetical imperative** and the **moral imperative**. In the first, some desirable outcome is sought and a cause-effect relationship is established. For instance, if one wishes to live longer, then one must give up smoking. Note that this implies a choice between two values: longevity or pleasure. It is left for the individual to choose one over the other. This is qualitatively different from the moral imperative, which is universal, categorical, and unconditional. For Immanuel Kant, there is no choice implied in the moral imperative: it is obeyed for no other reason than its own rightness. There is no end sought in following a moral imperative (Kant, 1785/1994a).

To Kant, then, rationality is the source of all value. He describes his **supreme categorical imperative**, that is, his notion of a universal ideal that everyone could apply to every situation, as:

“So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only” (Kant, 1785/1994b, p. 76).

Kant provides the example of lying to another as using the other person merely as a means to some other end; for example, a man begs for money for his “sick

child," then spends the money he collects on liquor for himself. The one hearing the lie would never condone this mode of behavior and, therefore, the end is not contained in the person to whom the lie is made. With Kant, then, a rational understanding is made of the Golden Rule of the Christian faiths (as well as many others): "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12, KJV; see also Matthew 6:1-4, and Matthew 5:44-45).

Kant continued the argument that the effects (i.e. - consequences) of one's actions do not determine whether the act is good or irrational. The consequences are beyond one's ability to control. The moral worth of a person's behavior lies in one's intentions. There is nothing of this world that can be called "good" outside of "good will" (Moore & Bruder, 1990). This, too, will be important later.

To conclude, Kant believed a good, moral will is one upon which a person acts for no other reason than because it is the right thing to do. Helping others out of feelings of sympathy or distress over their condition is of no moral worth. The moral worth is only that one's will is to help others because it is right to do so, even if it means helping someone considered to be an enemy.

## Moral Reasoning in Psychology

### A. Jean Piaget

The developmental psychologist Jean Piaget is used to bridge the two disciplines of philosophy and psychology, as his work was largely influenced by philosophical - as opposed to psychological - antecedents. Two of the main

contentions of Piaget's theory of child development are that a) children actively construct knowledge of their environment through manipulation and exploration and b) cognitive development occurs in stages. According to Piaget, a child becomes a moral being through repeated exposure to moral dilemmas appropriate to his or her age (Piaget, 1932/1965). He came to identify two stages in the moral reasoning of children: the heteronomous and autonomous moralities (Ibid.).

Heteronomous morality emerges at about the age of five and lasts until about the child's tenth year. In this stage, rules governing games such as marbles are invariable and handed down from an authority that forbids questioning of the rules. This stage is characterized by notions of egocentrism and an atmosphere which states that everyone who plays marbles always follows the rules. Also present is the condition of realism, that the rules of marbles are handed down by an objective, unapproachable, external force and cannot be altered (Flavell, 1963).

The following scenarios may be considered:

“Story A: A little boy who is called John is in his room. He is called to dinner. He goes into the dining room. But behind the door there was a chair, and on the chair there was a tray with fifteen cups on it. John couldn't have known that there was all this behind the door. He goes in, the door knocks against the tray, bang go the fifteen cups, and they all get broken!” (Piaget, 1932/1965, p. 122).

“Story B: Once there was a little boy whose name was Henry. One day when his mother was out he tried to get some jam out of the cupboard. He climbed up on to a chair and stretched out

his arm. But the jam was too high up and he couldn't reach it and have any. But while he was trying to get it he knocked over a cup. The cup fell down and broke." (Ibid.).

It is no difficult matter to derive from these stories that the issue in question, as was the case with Kant, is one of intentionality over consequences. At the stage of heteronomous morality, the child sees the first boy, John, as naughtier because more cups were broken.

This stage of moral development concurs with Piaget's notion of the pre-operational and concrete operational stages of cognitive development. The characteristics of these periods are that thinking moves toward logic, although it lacks the quality of abstraction. In 1963, Flavell characterized the pre-operational stage as being "unconcerned with proof or logical justification and...unaware of the effect of its communication on others" (p. 162). The second stage, concrete operational, evidences a greater degree of logical and flexible thought, although the child has not yet mastered the ability to think in the abstract. This idea of abstract thought is an important notion to grasp. The growing adolescent is becoming able to see all possible angles to a situation, even if such an angle is not one that is presented, as Kant argued, that experience provides a basis for knowledge, which is then free to slip the bonds the experience imposes.

As the adolescent reaches concrete operational thought, autonomous morality allows intentionality to become a stronger factor than consequences in settling moral issues. Henry, then, though he only knocked over one cup, is seen as being naughtier than John, as Henry had set out with the intention of stealing some jam. Through discussions with others and a realization that other



perspectives are possible, children come to settle conflicts in ways that are mutually beneficial and a standard of impartial fairness emerges. This reciprocity is manifested in children who express the same concern for others that they do for themselves, which is similar to Mill's notion of the impartial arbiter of issues who is not given to preferential treatment. Also at the autonomous stage, rules of play are adapted to fit special circumstances (Ibid.).

Another change from the heteronomous to the autonomous stages involves the notion of **immanent justice**. The first, heteronomous, stage holds that if one commits a bad or immoral act, then one will ultimately be made to suffer for it. As such, it would be entirely conceivable that the naughtier Henry-of-the-one-cup would fall off his bicycle and hurt himself as retribution for his behavior. This idea of immanent justice is the way that the natural world instills moral order through inescapable punishment. Other examples would be knives that cut children who have been forbidden to use them or the chair that collapses under Henry when he tries to steal jam.

This notion speaks to a child's paradigm of egocentrism and magic omnipotence, where nature obeys a specific code. It would seem very plausible to a child that the moon should follow them when they walk at night or that it is the act of going to bed that produces darkness. This entelechal notion extends easily to the point that children see things as the accomplices of grown-ups in making sure that punishment is served where the parents' vigilance has been evaded (Piaget, 256).

In the second, autonomous, stage, immanent justice is discarded and replaced with the idea that the punishment should be made to fit the crime and

meted out in a fair and even-handed fashion. This would be seen in the stealer who is trusted by no one.

Through investigation and exploration into moral issues, the child comes to realize a notion of reciprocity and fairness that can be adapted to fit a changing circumstance. This child, by eleven years or so, gives younger children who are just learning a game an extra try or may even overlook some errors. This is evidence that the child has moved outside of his or her own egocentrism and has started seeing the perspective of others. In this instance, egocentrism implies that the child sees his own needs and what is right for himself is what is right for everyone. For instance, the child whose mother is sick may offer her his teddy bear to comfort her. Also, the child experiences some evil that goes unpunished and some good acts that go unnoticed. Adult authority, then, can no longer create a true sense of justice in children. As the adult is in a position of power and control, there can be no homeostasis in the child's moral development. The child begins to work out moral problems on his own and with his peers. As he approaches adolescence, he comes to see himself as the adults' equal, even if this is not overtly expressed (Piaget, 1965; Pulaski, 1971).

Combined with the idea of impartial concern for others, a "Golden Rule" notion emerges that can be applied across person and situation as discussed in Kant's supreme categorical imperative (Pulaski, 1971).

Piaget leads one to understand that stage progression can only occur through the child's deliberation of the task and mental manipulation of the different factors that weigh into the problem. Children may progress to formal operations in some areas, yet remain concrete in others (horizontal decolage) if

there is limited exposure for such a task. One might accurately predict that a child who frequently plays with blocks and dough will progress more rapidly to such tasks as conservation of mass and visual-spatial tasks on intelligence tests. Such reasoning extends to the moral domain as well. Encouraging children to think for themselves would foster greater development in the moral domain than would any constraining attempts to create a moral identity foreclosure. An example would be the child who progresses to an adult-level conclusion without first working through the issues involved. The result would be more of a tape-recording of what the adult said than an intrinsic conclusion of the child's (Getz, 1984).

#### B. Lawrence Kohlberg

Expanding on Piaget's work, Kohlberg developed the six stages of moral reasoning with which one is familiar today:

Level One - Pre-conventional Moral thought is dominated by external forces rather than by a standard code. Thinking falls more along fearful and dependent or opportunistic lines than internal autonomy.

Stage 1 - Obedience and punishment - Deference is made to a superior power. This orientation seeks to avoid getting in trouble.

Stage 2 - Instrumentalist - Egoistic orientation believes that right action is that which satisfies the person's own needs, which also means occasionally satisfying

the needs of others. Exchange and reciprocity are key, with the actor becoming aware of the relative nature of each person's needs and perspectives.

Level Two - Conventional Doing what others expect and maintaining conventional social orders and norms are important, as is staying in keeping with "good" and "right" roles.

Stage 3 - "Good boy, nice girl" - The actor seeks approval from others and has a desire to please and help them. Judgements take intentionality into account and the actor strives to conform to a stereotypical norm or role of behavior.

Stage 4 - "Law and order" - One seeks to do one's duty and to show respect for authority. The social order is respected for its own sake, as seen in Hobbes' view of "my country, right or wrong."

Level Three - Post-conventional The moral benchmark lies in a sharable standard, right, or duty. The individual seeks to conform to this standard.

Stage 5 - Social contract - Duty is perceived as a product of social contract. Violations of the rights and wills of others is generally avoided, and value is placed on the majority's will and welfare. Locke's utilitarianism offers "the greatest good for the greatest number."

Stage 6 - Universal ethical principle - Conscience directs one's actions, and the orientation is to logical universality and applicability of a consistent moral framework. A high value is placed on mutual respect and trust.

(Kohlberg, 1967, p. 171)

At the highest stages of thought in the Kohlberg model, the familiar Kantian notion of universality is applied to all situations by all people. Kant's moral test still holds fast, that the determination of whether to engage in an action is whether one would prescribe the same action to all people in all situations. In these stages, Piaget's postulates of heteronomy translate to the first three of the stages, and heteronomy carries from stage four into stage six.

When Kohlberg conducted his investigations into the moral nature of humanity, he typically posed his dilemmas and then recorded the participant's responses, which were then graded by trained judges who attempted to reach some consensus on the level of moral thought that the participant displayed for a given response (Kohlberg et al., 1978). Note that this method has been criticized as a weakness in his research, as there could be room for subjectivity in the grading of the responses. Kohlberg addressed this concern with extensive training going into each of the graders and a high degree of inter-rater reliability. However, the face validity of the statements in question versus the comments of the graders leaves room to doubt whether the grading could ever be truly objective (Kohlberg, 1983).

In addition, some responses that Kohlberg collected did not fit into any category that his rationalistic, Western thought had developed. The Heinz

dilemma drew a sour face from one village chief in New Guinea, who replied that, for Heinz to find himself in such a difficult position, the whole village must accept responsibility for not having come to his aid sooner. In India, amidst gross over-crowding, disease, famine, and death, a woman responded that it really made no difference one way or the other. Property is stolen. A woman dies. Such things were so commonplace in her schemata that one more such incident would hardly warrant turning one's head, let alone allowing for unnecessary cogitation over the matter. She concluded that such matters could not be worked out on an individual basis and would probably have to be tackled at a macro level (Vasudev & Hummel, 1987; Kohlberg, 1984).

Another criticism of Kohlberg's work concerns the link between moral thought and moral action, an argument even Lawrence Kohlberg saw fit to make in 1973. It would certainly seem plausible that, in a face-to-face interview, the respondent would make some effort, even at an unconscious level, to distort his true moral manner. There are also many incidents where a person felt certain that he would behave one way and, when faced with a moral challenge in real life, did exactly the opposite. This researcher talked with a Vietnam veteran who smiled to himself when new recruits protested being in Vietnam, due to their conscientious objections to war. They professed that there was no way they could ever be made to kill another human being. However, it never failed that, as soon as the first enemy bullet whizzed overhead, the "conscientious objector" would be on the ground and shooting back as quickly as he could (Thoma, Rest, & Davison, 1991).

Snell's 1996 research suggests a mediated connection between Kohlberg's model and the decisions that take place in the real world, where people might not have a full appreciation for the factors in a decision when looking at an analog study. In real life, however, that person might be confronted in a more real sense by such pressures as anticipated rewards and punishments or personality variables, for instance. Trevino's 1992 study supported the notion that, in analog moral research, people reason out their arguments at whatever moral stage is highest for them. For instance, if a person is a stage four thinker, it would be plausible to assume that the person could reason at any of the lower stages as well, perhaps being influenced by instrumental morality or even punishment and reward. What Trevino found, however, was that the highest stage that the person has attained is the one used to weigh a moral dilemma.

Consequential ethics cannot be ignored in moral research. It has been demonstrated that corporate managers reason in a more utilitarian fashion. Furthermore, the perceived consequences are critical in examining the sequence of their reasoning style (Weber, 1996).

In one classic study that looked at the link between moral thought and moral action, seminary students showed up at a certain time in one building and were then told they had to give a talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan in another building. On the walkway between the two buildings, a confederate of the researchers lay groaning as the student walked past, supposedly looking very much like the victim of the story. In 60 percent of the cases, the participants did not offer help to the "victim." In some instances, the participants actually stepped over this "wounded man" as they hurried to the next building to give their speech

(Darley & Batson, 1973). This would imply that the correlation between one's moral convictions and one's actions is not always strong.

Perhaps one of the mechanisms that did not fire in the sequence of the students who passed by the "victim" was in recognizing that someone needed aid. Surely, in the de-briefing, those students were smacking their foreheads in dismay over their actions.

Criticisms aside, however, Kohlberg's work represents a breaking advance in the field of moral thought and his model has gained wide acceptance. Another aspect of the stage theory is how people move between the stages and what transitional mechanisms must take place. In a longitudinal study of 227 school children in British Columbia, Walker and Taylor (1991) concluded that most people reason predominantly at a single stage. However, they are also careful to point out that there is some reasoning that takes place in adjacent stages. If a person is reasoning predominantly above the mode, one might conclude that person is in a transition phase and is progressing to a higher stage. If above-mode reasoning is present (i.e., a positive bias), this seems to be the necessary and sufficient requirement for modal advance (Berkowitz & Keller, 1994). True to Piagetian theory, disequilibrium lies at the seat of the motivation for transition (Feldman, 1980; Thoma & Rest, 1999).

James Rest (1984) has postulated a sequence of moral thought that helps to fill in the gaps about why some moral dilemmas are never recognized as such. In his work, Rest outlines four non-invariant and non-sequential steps that ordinarily occur in the process of moral thinking.



In the first step, a situation is seen in a moral light. In Rest's words, the individual must "interpret the situation in terms of how one's actions affect the welfare of others" (Rest, 1984, p. 57). This involves a "chess" cognition, whereby the individual imagines the possible courses of action and how each possible move would affect the welfare of the parties involved.

This can be affected by several factors from social psychological research. For instance, if the observer is not clear that there is a victim in distress, he will be less likely to help (Staub, 1978). Also, a plethora of factors relating to how connected we feel to the victim will influence how quickly we perceive that a moral dilemma is taking place in front of us.

In the second component, the person evaluates what the ideal moral action would be. By this time, the person has developed a range of possible responses to the situation and now bends to the task of deciding which is the one course that best meets his own moral schemata. This is also the stage where the aforementioned theories of Piaget and Kohlberg intercede. When faced with a morally novel situation, the person calls on his memory of moral resolutions and the issues pertinent to the situation (Ibid.).

Interestingly, there seems to be a correlation between the amount of education one has and one's level of moral reasoning. According to Rest's research, adults in the 50-60 year old range who completed high school but did not attend college have about the same scores on an instrument of moral reasoning as current high school students. Also, adults in the 50-60 year range who did complete college have about the same moral score as their younger, college-attending counterparts (Rest, 1979). This research seems reflective of

Piaget's original developmental notion that the more a person struggles with a developmental task, the higher that person will progress. Another finding that is germane to the helping professions is that the moral development scores of medical interns was significantly linked to the quality of care they provided. This is particularly significant in light of the fact that there are few good predictive indicators of the future performance of medical students. A possible interpretation of this finding is that being able to help others is linked significantly to one's level of moral judgement (Sheehan, Husted, & Candee, 1981, as quoted in Rest, 1984). How these figures play out in military populations, however, is not known.

In the third component, a person decides whether or not to fulfill the moral ideal. This is influenced by a constellation of competing values. In many instances, there is a marked difference between what one ought to do and what one actually does (Blasi, 1980; Kurtines & Gewitz, 1984; Milgram, 1974). In 1977, Damon contributed to the ideas of distributive justice by asking children how an odd number of candy bars ought to be distributed among their peers. Their ideas about how they ought to be distributed were generally more noble and lofty than what occurred in reality. Not surprisingly, when the children were asked to fairly distribute paper clips among their peers, the moral thoughts were consistent with the moral actions!

With so many competing values at stake in making a moral decision, why, then, would the moral alternative win out? The motivations to act morally are influenced by a host of factors which have, in turn, been supported by a bevy of research. Wilson (1975) proposed the ethological notion that we behave morally

because evolution has bred moral, altruistic behavior into us in order to advance the species (also Eysenck, 1976). Aronfreed (1968) exhumed St. Augustine's notion that shame, guilt, and fear of God motivate us to "act right." Bandura offered that being moral was not a factor of motivation per se; rather, it was simply a matter of learning social behavior and "monkey see - monkey do" (1977). However, this argument has never made it to postconventional moral thought.

Elliot Turiel was one researcher who distinguished between morality and social convention. In his 1980 work, Turiel stated that customs are actions that are performed with some regularity but do not serve a social-organizational function. For many, it is customary to eat breakfast every morning. However, there is no obligation to do so, and the custom is readily alterable due to its arbitrary nature. However, within the moral domain, "actions are not arbitrary, and the existence of a social regulation is not necessary for an individual to view an event as a transgression" (p. 258). In the example of hitting someone else, it is the features that are intrinsic to the event that constitute the transgression (i.e. - the consequences to the victim), not the social context in which the event took place.

The distinction, then, implies that a notion of justice is included in the ethical argument. The assaultive person was doing someone an injustice by hitting his victim. However, it would not be seen as unjust if the businessman opted not to take his breakfast before heading off to work.

The final component of Rest's theory is the implementation and execution of the moral plan (Rest, 1984). Character seems to be a major factor in this stage,

and the ambiguous nature of this idea was plumbed by Hartshorne and May in their landmark three-volume work (1929). In their view, a degree of consistency exists whereby similar traits and characteristics maintain stable patterns across time and situations. Simply having the valued ideals of firm resolve, persistence, and ego-strength are not enough. One could reasonably argue that the 16th century conquistador Cortez had a forfeit of all of these when he conquered the Aztec empire.

Self-control, then, is an important factor. In 1974, Mischel conducted an experiment that demonstrated the efficacy of cognitive components in self-control for children. In the control group (granted they were not aptly named), children were seated before a marshmallow and were instructed to think of all its wonderful qualities, such as its soft, chewy sweetness. The experimental group focused on more neutral qualities, thinking of the marshmallow instead as a "puffy, white cloud" or as a cotton ball. The children who thought of the more gustatory qualities consistently waited for a shorter time before gobbling up the tasty treats.

Many factors, then, lead a person toward or away from a moral course of action. To summarize Rest's theory, then, the four components in the process of moral thinking are:

Component I - Interpret the situation as a moral dilemma, recognizing how one's actions affects the welfare of others.

Component II - Identify what the morally ideal course of action would be.

Component III - Select and retain the moral ideal from competing values or desires.

Component IV - Implementation and execution of the moral plan (Rest, 1984).

This should give the reader a fairly thorough account of the work that has been done in the field of individual moral development. Whether the individual's cognitions may be studied in isolation of the influences of others, however, remains a matter of debate. Group decision-making has also been a subject of interest in the recent literature. Dukerich et al. studied the leader's role in group morality. Their findings indicate that the degree of principled reasoning demonstrated by the group leader was a key factor in the moral reasoning and growth of individual group members. This shows that the group leader has a significant impact not only on how the individual members conceptualize moral issues, but also on which issues members conceptualize as moral.

Perhaps the most difficult moral decisions involve those that center on taking a human life. In a study of capital jurors by Haney, Sontag, & Costanzo (1994), it seems clear from their research that, in a situation with such gravity inherent in its outcome, the decision-makers appreciate more structure as opposed to less and some acknowledgment of the emotional aspects of the task they are asked to perform.

Personal values, then, are key in the process of moral reasoning. James Weber (1993) expanded on the work of both Lawrence Kohlberg and that of Milton Rokeach (1973) to integrate the principle stages of moral reasoning with a

four-factor model of personal values, to include terminal values (personal and social) and instrumental values (competence and moral). Rokeach uses the term "terminal values" to mean the moral light in which a person is viewed, which helps to determine how much attention is given to a particular moral decision. Instrumental values are the ways in which a person wrestles with moral dilemmas, drawing perhaps on past moral decisions or efficiency of reasoning. Analysis of the results showed significant relationships between the two theories, suggesting that personal values do play an important factor in moral decision-making.

Another researcher integrating personality and moral judgment is Avaraham Leslau, whose 1994 research showed a relationship between psychoticism (impulsivity, hostility, and aggressiveness) and moral judgement, whereby a person who rates high on a measure of psychoticism is unlikely to carry empathy or humaneness into a moral situation.

The moral reasoning of managers has been studied to show that managers typically reason at stage three or four of Kohlberg's stages (Weber, 1990). Differences were found, however, when manipulating the complexity of the moral issue and when studying the size of the organization in which the manager was employed. In Weber's study, it was found that dilemmas that were couched in a business theme (e.g. - loan fraud) were decided using a lower level of reasoning than those in which the decision involved an individual life. Also, those self-employed or small business managers reasoned at a higher level than their corporate counterparts.

A 1993 study by Ruth Linn examined one particular case of moral reasoning where an officer was given a morally reprehensible order to break the

bones of villagers suspected of inciting riots in the 1988 Intifada in Israel. Ben Moshe's testimony reveals considerable inner conflict with these orders, particularly after rounding up unprotesting villagers and carrying out his orders. Though he was never an agent (i.e., he never beat any of the villagers himself), he recognized his decision as having a greater impact on the villagers than those decisions of the individual soldiers who carried out his orders. Linn's research suggests that resistance to authority may be motivated by a care orientation and that a morality of justice is difficult, if not impossible, to separate from a morality of care such as Carol Gilligan described in her 1982 work. Gilligan (1982) had found that women typically were portrayed as reasoning on a moral level significantly lower than that of men based on Kohlberg's grading system. She contended that Kohlberg's theory was based on a justice-seeking mentality that did not fit the moral structure of women, which is based on care.

The context in which moral behavior occurs was a matter of a second (1994) study by Linn, in which she describes how 36 conscientious objectors in the 1982 War in Lebanon were branded as "leftists, delinquents, and lawbreakers who were undermining democracy" (Ibid., pg. 424). This clearly shows that their actions were viewed in political, rather than moral terms. The individual, however, is still the one responsible for actions undertaken in war and not for the righteousness of the war's objectives. Though the moral arguments of the objectors were articulate, it was questioned whether or not they were sincere. Apparently, this is not the only instance where the individual soldiers decided that the qualifications for a just war had been crossed. Even with the rigid control and

discipline placed on military troops, independent though is difficult or even impossible to completely efface.

An individual's prior actions are also taken into account when judgments are made about his or her decisions. In a study of individual recent moral history, Nisan and Horenczyk (1990) found that a single, unworthy act generated less guilt and was more allowable in a generally moral person than in one who generally behaves in an immoral fashion. Actions, then, are not performed in a vacuum and the morality of an act is evaluated not only in terms of its inherent moral adequacy, "but also by evaluation of the moral status of the actor about to perform it" (Ibid., 41). It suggests that analogous research (e.g., the Heinz dilemma) fails to take this factor into account.

### Decision-making

Central to the study of combat morality is the study of decision-making as a separate field of research apart from moral reasoning. Prominent in this area, Janis and Mann (1977) posited that the only sound and rational path to effective decision-making is through a painstaking search for relevant information, unbiased assimilation of that information, and appraisal of alternatives.

Keinan, Friedland, and Ben-Porath (1987) discussed how decision-makers scan for alternatives. Where vigilance might be the most sound process to decision, hypervigilance may show "hasty, disorganized and incomplete evaluation of information, leading to faulty decisions and post-decisional regret" (Ibid., p. 220).



Johnston, Driskell, and Salas also noted that the hypervigilant pattern of decisions could occasionally save time and effort, making it an effective course of action in a naturalistic task setting (1997). Janis and Mann (1977), however, would contend that the decision rendered in hypervigilance is one that is defective and comes from a poor coping strategy.

The naturalistic style of decision-making is reported by Orasanu and Connolly (1993). If the decision task is unclear (e.g., the patrol is sent out with the ill-defined goal of “patrolling”), the available information may have led to uncertainty due to missing, unreliable data or changing conditions. Enemy may or may not have been present and the reports on enemy activity that intelligence gave were always suspect. Other items identified in the model include time stress, high stakes, and multiple players. Organizational goals and norms factor importantly here, as they do in every facet of military life. As such, it would be unfeasible to isolate decision-making from the task in which the decision is made (Klein, 1996; Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 1998; Endsley & Smith, 1996).

How information is analyzed in a real-life situation also bears a good deal of weight on what decision is made. A study by Endsley & Smith in Texas (1996) suggested that, when faced with multiple targets on their radar scope, fighter pilots “chunk” a good deal of their information to allow for greater efficiency of information processing. This may be of particular importance for the pilot faced with a bewildering array of electronics and instrumentation and having to make extremely fast decisions that can have such lasting impact.

Another distinction of note is the difference between uncontrollable and controllable stress as it impacts decision-making. In a 1994 study by Peters, it

was shown that uncontrollable stress has a greater negative impact on mood (these participants had increased anger while the control group remained relatively stable) and the decision making process. In the study, those facing uncontrollable stress were less systematic and accurate than those in the control group, regardless of the type of stress the participants faced. In this study, a person moves from a period of zero control to an attempt to gain control over his surroundings.

The notion of time as a factor in decision making is discussed by Maule and Hockey (1993) to differentiate between time as a deadline to mediate changing affective states as they influence cognition and to assume that time is only one of a number of factors included in a cost/benefit evaluation of strategy.

Studies of animal combat have rendered two possible conclusions. The first is that, given the threat of retaliation, animals only fight to injure if less aggressive measures have failed and then only if the potential benefit is expected to outweigh the cost. The second possibility is that any animal attack will escalate unless the attack is thwarted by the defender (Pellis, 1997). Such combat involves moment-to-moment decision making, as opposed to one conviction that is carried through the sequence of events. In humans, however, such a study discounts the idea of the "preemptive strike" that is supported by a majority of retired officers in a 1990 study by Brunk, Secret, and Tamashiro. They further concluded that the view held by scholars of war is either not salient or inconsistent with the view of the military officer.

Perhaps studies of emergency response strategies would be appropriate in shedding light on the cognitive strategies used by combat officers. Kontogiannis

(1996) identified several characteristics that are worthy of note in emergency-tempo decision-making:

“The main factors that are likely to influence human decision making in managing an emergency can be summarized as follows:

The consequences of failing to manage an emergency are highly stressful and potentially life threatening.

There is time pressure in accomplishing tasks in order to avoid escalation of the emergency.

Existing operating procedures offer little guidance in dealing with many unfamiliar aspects of the emergency.

Operators have to perform tasks for which they have received little or no prior training.

Information available about technical conditions may be ambiguous and unreliable.

The workload is very high as operators may have to manage multiple tasks and work for prolonged hours, and finally,

Decision making is affected by conflicting goals, uncertainty about outcomes, and negative feedback of results (p. 76).”

In 1996, Klein delineated the aspects of the Recognition-Primed Decision, where rapid decisions are made based on experience and a typical course of action, similar to the clinician’s model where diagnosis leads to treatment protocols. “Over-learning” has been shown to be the primary method through

which training becomes robust to the effects of stress. The following vignette is taken from John Master's The Road Past Mandalay, as quoted in Grossman's 1995 work On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society:

"The No. 1 [gunner] was 17 years old - I knew him. His No. 2 [assistant gunner] lay on the left side, beside him, head toward the enemy, a loaded magazine in his hand ready to whip onto the gun the moment the No. 1 said "Change!" The No. 1 started firing, and a Japanese machine gun engaged them at close range. The No. 1 got the first burst through the face and neck, which killed him instantly. But he did not die where he lay, behind the gun. He rolled over to the right, away from the gun, his left hand coming up in death to tap his No. 2 on the shoulder in the signal that means Take over. The No. 2 did not have to push the corpse away from the gun. It was already clear" (pg. 18).

Though it seems common knowledge in the military that constant drilling in martial skills leads to better performance on the battlefield, this notion has received little attention from the literature. It has been demonstrated that well-learned or over-learned tasks become automatic, which has the benefit of being robust to stress, requires less attention, and enhances the soldier's feeling of predictability and control (Driskell & Salas, 1991). Through this over-learning, it is hoped that the soldier develops an experience base from which to draw at the crucial point of the Recognition-Primed Decision model (Klein, 1996).

Overall, the existing literature on this subject is lacking. Many attempts were made to uncover what research is out there, but the brunt of military research focuses either on fighter pilots or submarine captains. Of those, the majority seem to focus on decision-making styles, usually in hopes of getting these officers to think more rapidly. There were, however, a number of research articles that dealt with the moral view officers hold of war as an idea. Research involving ground officers leading troops into combat, however, were extremely limited.

#### Statement of Problem

The area that historically has posed what are, arguably, the toughest moral decisions in the world is the field of combat. The extreme nature of the intensity encountered in combat requires those who participate to face decisions involving life and death with a high price for failure. The officers who lead troops into battle are given the responsibility to determine not only the lives and deaths of the enemy, but also of their own men as they direct their subordinates to undertake dangerous and sometimes lethal missions. This is aside and apart from the notions of the morality of war itself, the ius ad bello. This deals perhaps less with an academic/philosophical and more with an applied nature of morality, of ius in bello, where those weighing the decisions bear immediate and horrible witness to the cost of their moral judgements.

The proposed study will seek to investigate the moral reasoning of military officers who led troops into combat. It is hoped that, through this research, the following questions may be clarified:

- 1) What is it like to be a leader of military troops rendering moral decisions in combat?
- 2) What are the ethical points with which the officers struggle upon encountering morally complex issues?
- 3) If an officer acts in either an ethical or unethical manner, can James Rest's framework be identified as playing significant parts?
- 4) Regardless of the decisions made while in combat, does the combat veteran demonstrate development in moral reasoning? In other words, looking back on the decisions rendered in combat, does the veteran show that he struggled with the issues and, perhaps, developed an alternate course of action that was more consistent with his moral nature?
- 5) What training in ethics do the officers receive prior to being placed in combat and does this training influence their decisions when under fire?
- 6) Are there identifiable differences in the moral reasoning and associated thought processes between the officers who have been in combat and the officers who have never seen combat?

## Method

Evaluating the questions that the author wished to clarify through this research resulted in a determination that quantitative research would fall short of the desired illumination. The nature of these questions is abstract and open-ended. A pilot study showed that few combat veterans were bound by the multiple choice nature of Rest's Defining Issues Test (DIT, Rest, 1984) when presented with questions in a verbal format. One veteran was able to explain that the decisions faced in combat were unamenable to "multiple-choice thinking" and that there was almost never a clear-cut course of action in dealing with issues of moral impact. The veterans who participated in the pilot study also had enough variability of experiences both in combat and in the development of their moral schemata that the richness of their phenomenological experiences could have been restrained in the use of quantitative research.

The qualitative form of inquiry, then, was selected as being more conducive to the conduct of this research. The characteristics of the qualitative study are described by Hammersley in his 1990 work entitled Reading Ethnographic Research:

a) People's behavior is studied in everyday contexts, rather than under experimental conditions by the researcher.

b) Data are gathered from a **range** of sources, but observation and/or relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones.

c) The approach to data collection is 'unstructured' in the sense that it does not involve following through a detailed plan set up at the beginning; nor are the categories used for interpreting what people say and do pre-given or fixed. This does not mean that the research is unsystematic; simply that initially the data are collected in as raw a form, and on as wide a front, as feasible.

d) The focus is usually a single setting or group, of relatively small scale. In life history research the focus may even be on a single individual.

e) The analysis of the data involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions and mainly take the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantifications and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most (p. 1-2).

Perhaps the most compelling reason for this author to employ the qualitative inquiry is the author's clinical background as a therapist. The information-gathering nature of the data collection lends itself very neatly to the author's experience interviewing clients seeking treatment, as well as the author's more humanist leanings that focus on the richness and diversity of each individual in his world, which is best learned through an interpersonal connection between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Having established justification for the use of qualitative research, some effort will be made to address the criterion for selection of participants. The



requirements entailed that the majority of participants be officers who led troops in ground combat. This implies three core points:

First, the participants interviewed in the pilot study confirmed that there was a difference between being in combat and serving in the rear echelons, as the combat soldier places himself at risk and is also expected to take the lives of the enemy. In addition to these challenging circumstances, the officer is responsible for ordering others to risk their lives or take the lives of others.

The second point, that the participant had led troops, is important for the aforementioned reason and to distinguish those who served as staff officers (e.g. - an officer who handled supply matters or communications) from those who commanded troops (e.g. - the platoon leaders and company commanders).

Lastly, the arena of ground combat provides some loose homogeneity of experiences as compared with the pilot of a fighter aircraft or the captain of a submarine. In addition, while the hardships endured by the participants of all three of these combat settings were certainly very high, the moral complexities faced by those troops engaged in ground combat seem somewhat higher, as the soldier on the ground is more likely to see the result of his actions (e.g. - the expressions on the faces of the soldiers he ordered to fight who were then killed). Morally, this factor of seeing the results of one's action seems to generate a greater degree of doubt and uncertainty than those who are somewhat more removed from the impact of their actions, such as the pilot of a bomber who drops his bomb load from 20,000 feet at near-supersonic speeds. There seems to be a connection that the soldier in ground combat forms not only with his subordinates but also with the enemy. The pilot study interviews served to show that many of

the veterans felt varying degrees of respect for the fighting prowess of the enemy they faced, if not a respect for the personal lives of those they killed (e.g. - a concern for the wives and children the fallen enemy soldier left behind).

While most of the participants were veterans of combat command, not all of them were. Three were officers at an officer training program where soldiers are sent to receive training to become officers and, upon satisfactory completion of the training, are given a commission as Army officers. They were included to provide further illumination (through negative contrast) of the manner in which combat experience may influence one's moral framework. Two other participants were combat veterans, but were chaplains at the time and thus did not command troops. They were included because many moral issues were brought to them by the soldiers they served and, as such, they unwittingly collected a wealth of qualitative data for the author.

All of the participants were presented with the Kohlberg dilemma of the company commander in Korea (Duska & Whelan, 1975, p. 122, also included in Appendix B) and associated questions were asked. This was done to gain some appreciation for the manner in which they settled moral issues in combat and to assess the degree to which the officers took responsibility for moral issues.

Practical considerations limited the selection of participants to nearby areas, those being in central and west Texas, central Oklahoma, and the western part of Virginia, based on the author's locale. These participants were identified through word-of-mouth to better establish rapport. Most of the participants interviewed in the pilot study were quick to mention that they were reluctant to discuss their combat experiences with people who did not have similar

experiences themselves. The author found it useful to ask those interviewed in the pilot study, "Do you know of anyone else with similar experiences whom I might interview?" This question usually resulted in suggestions for further participants, a technique that may be described as "snowballing." When contacting the next potential participant and explaining the nature of the research, the author found it to be a useful tool to mention that he had acquired that person's name through a colleague of his. In one occurrence, the person making the suggestion was good enough to contact the potential participant prior to the author's telephone call and explained the nature of this research. In that instance, rapport was easily effected, and the interview quickly uncovered a wealth of information concerning the participant's experiences.

### Participants

The participants involved in this study were thirteen combat officer veterans who served in armed conflict ranging from World War II to the Gulf War. The length of the interviews ran from two to four hours with the veterans being interviewed one or two times. Interviews were semi-structured, with a list of questions used by the author included as Appendix A. The participants were informed of the nature of the study and were asked to sign a consent form, which also included a clause for audio taping the interview. Not all of the participants were taped, as it was the author's unfortunate realization two interviews into the research that he should have been taping all along. Those interviews were conducted with the author taking extensive notes, which were then transcribed by the author later in the week. The taped interviews were transcribed by a legal

secretary retained by the author. These transcriptions were analyzed to identify themes.

The veterans were given an assurance of anonymity by the author and, as such, pseudonyms are used throughout this work. It is the author's realization that, given the level of intelligence and education of the reader who is likely to peruse this work, the identity of some of the participants could be discerned. The author requests that the reader not look upon this work as evidence for a trial (the material presented herein is oftentimes very emotionally charged and could lend itself to judgment statements about the veterans); rather, that it be used in the spirit for which it was intended, i.e. to illuminate the experience of the officer qua the decision-maker in combat.

What follows is a list of those thirteen officers and a short description of each, to include the number of times, length, and setting of the interviews in order that the reader may have a dramatis personae as a guide to this research.

Colonel Aaron - COL Aaron was interviewed in his office at a National Guard Officer Candidate School. He was the commandant of the school and was at first somewhat suspicious of the study until he was assured that the author was not attempting to "dig up dirt" on the OCS process. He had never seen combat, but had served in the National Guard over 25 years. Interview notes were handwritten and then transcribed.

Captain Don - COL Aaron introduced me to CPT Don, who agreed to an interview over dinner lasting two and a half hours. Notes on this interview were

handwritten and then transcribed. In addition to being the senior tactical officer (S-TAC) in charge of training the officer candidates, he also oversaw the honor committee at the OCS and served as a lay minister at his church, bringing a Bible to dinner with him. He had been in the National Guard for ten years, none of which were spent in combat.

Lieutenant Matt - CPT Don introduced me to LT Matt, one of the tactical officers (TAC) leading a platoon (about 30 soldiers) of officer candidates. The interview lasted for about an hour and 15 minutes and notes were taken by hand, then transcribed. He had been in the National Guard for about two years and had never been in combat.

Major Mike - Two interviews were conducted, with the first running two hours and the second running one hour. The author contacted him by simply walking into the ROTC department of a Midwestern university and asking the head professor if he knew of anyone who would be appropriate for my research. MAJ Mike provided me with his personal copy of Makin's 1981 work, War, Morality, and the Military Profession, as well as his video copy of "Breaker Morant," a film that deals with morality in war. Interviews were conducted in his office and were recorded by the author's written notes. MAJ Mike served as an enlisted Air Force airman in Vietnam, as an officer in Latin America counter-drug operations, and as the operations officer of an artillery battalion in the Gulf War.

Officer Candidate Tom - One interview was conducted lasting for two and a half hours. The interview was recorded in writing by the author. We started the interview in the office of his supervisor and continued at a table in a barracks hallway (we were alone in the barracks). I contacted him through the commandant of an officer training school in the Midwest, whom I had asked for leads of who might be appropriate for this research. OC Tom was an officer-in-training, but was enlisted for eight years as a sniper with the Navy SEALs in the Gulf War and in Latin American counter-drug operations.

Chaplain James - Two interviews were conducted, with the first lasting two hours and the second lasting one hour. The interviews were taped and conducted in his office at his church in a Southwestern city. The author contacted him through a mutual friend. CHP James served as a chaplain to the Special Forces in Vietnam and was in contact with the moral concerns raised by many of the officers and enlisted troops who were associated with irregular units.

Chaplain Bobby - Two interviews were conducted, with the first lasting one-and-a-half hours and the second lasting 45 minutes. The interviews were taped and conducted in his office at a Southwestern university, where he coaches the track team. He was contacted through a mutual friend. CHP Bobby served as chaplain to the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Vietnam and was aware of the moral concerns of that unit's members. CHP Bobby provided the author with eleven books and five videos pertinent to combat morality which are used to cross-reference the emerging themes.

Colonel Jack - The first interview lasted two hours and the second lasted 30 minutes. The interviews were taped and conducted at his home in the Southwest, where he is retired. He was contacted through CHP James. Jack was an infantry platoon leader with Patton's Third Army in World War II and was in the first unit to cross the Rhine and then in the first American unit to see the inside of a Nazi concentration camp. He served later in Vietnam and retired after serving over 30 years in the Army. COL Jack provided the author with a copy of a Newsweek article on concentration camps and several letters describing his experiences.

Captain Todd - The first interview lasted two hours and the second lasted one hour. CPT Todd's interviews were taped and conducted first in his residence in the Southwest, then at his nearby office. He was contacted through a mutual friend and through CHP Jerry. CPT Todd was originally sent to Vietnam as a combat engineer platoon leader and was then trained to become part of the Special Forces.

Lieutenant Blake - One interview was conducted lasting two and a half hours. The interview was taped and took place at a fast-food restaurant in the Southwest where his son works. He was contacted through CHP Bobby. LT Blake was sent to Vietnam as an infantry platoon leader. He provided the author with a packet of materials describing his experiences and some related news clippings.

Colonel Franks - One taped interview lasted three hours and was conducted at his office at a Southeastern university. He was contacted through a mutual friend in the military. COL Franks was a first sergeant in the Marines in Korea and later a platoon leader lieutenant with the Marines in Vietnam, where he received the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award, for his actions. After more than 40 years of martial service, he was still on active duty with the Marines at the time of the interview.

Colonel Brady - This gentleman had been working as a psychologist for the past fourteen years and is still on active duty with the Army at a post in the Southwest. During Vietnam, however, COL Brady was the leader of an elite Pathfinder unit. One interview was conducted lasting three hours.

Lieutenant Able - LT Able was contacted through MAJ Mike and two interviews lasting a total of four hours were conducted over the telephone and taped using an adapter. LT Able was an infantry platoon leader in the Korean War and is working now as a minister in the Midwest.

In addition to the invaluable data provided by these veterans, material resources in the form of books and videos were used to gain a better understanding of the experience of the officer in combat. A list of these materials is included as Appendix C.

## Procedures



The method of qualitative inquiry carried several implications for the proposed research. First, reliance was placed on the interview as the primary means of collecting data. The data desired for this research focused on the phenomenological experience of the combat veterans. As such, the questions asked of the participants were, for the most part, phrased at the discretion of the examiner. A list of the most common and pertinent questions is included in Appendix A, although the individualized focus on the subject resulted in some matters being probed and inquired further than others in the pursuit of the participant's story. The relation of the veteran's personal experiences was retrospective based on what he remembered about the war. The follow-up questions for Kohlberg's scenario of a company commander in Korea, however, were included in each interview (please see Appendix B).

A review of relevant documents was also an integral part of this research. Through the cooperation of local military libraries, the list of references named in Appendix C was made available to the author. These references, relevant psychological literature, and other documents provided to the author through the interviewees were then evaluated for their content pertaining to the experience of the officer making moral decisions in combat. Through this combination of interviews and document review, it is hoped that a reasonable amount of triangulation can illuminate an understanding of the experiences of the study's participants.

This is what was desired for the methodology used in this research. It was clarified and revised as the data came in, but it is the author's impression was that

this answered concerns previously raised by the committee. The author also understands that there may be concerns raised about the intrusion of subjectivity into this field of research. In an attempt to address such concerns, it would be beneficial for the reader to understand that the author's perspective comes as a person who has served 13 years in the armed services and is currently on active duty as a psychologist, though has never seen combat.

### Results

What was obtained from these veterans were 22 cassette tapes of interviews and about 50 pages of handwritten notes. Efforts were then made to transcribe the tapes, some of which was done by the author and some of which was done through hired transcription services. Four different services were used, all kept under a contract of confidentiality until, ultimately, about 500 pages of transcribed interviews were produced. Once the hard copies were printed, the process of data analysis was begun.

After several attempts at making sense of the data, the author struck upon indexing each interview for relevant phrases, lines, and quotes. These passages were grouped according to similarity (e.g. - Two passages might be similar in that they both relate to the feelings of patriotism and nationalistic fervor the veteran had while he was still training). In the original groupings, there were between 130 to 150 patterns, which had shown no major improvements in manageability or "graspability" of the data from the 1,500 pages of transcripts. Discarding the idea that only one pattern was necessary (William Tecumseh Sherman, who pillaged and ransacked Georgia in the War Between the States, sagaciously

declared, “War is hell.”), the myriad of various and sundry patterns were concentrated into the first eight patterns that appear below. A ninth pattern, the “wallow factor,” was finally added under the consideration that it was set apart enough from the others and important enough as to deserve its own, distinct mention.

These patterns were further condensed and, in some cases, eliminated altogether to better speak to the focus of this research. Four patterns were eliminated as being less than relevant to the research questions and two of the remaining patterns were melded into other patterns to which they bore some similarity. Finally, three patterns remained to cover the patterns yet retain some cogency of theme across the veterans.

Following the establishment of the patterns, passages that made it into the index were placed under the headings they best fit, sometimes under more than one. Through these inductive means, commonalities in the veterans’ stories were gleaned from their interviews and arranged into three patterns that follow and are, hopefully, somewhat more manageable and coherent than the original data.

- 1) The officer has a desire for control over his environment.
- 2) An officer feels responsible for the troops he leads into combat.
- 3) Distance seems to loosen the bonds of what is morally acceptable, while proximity seems to produce a “wallow” factor of remorse over the killing.

This study will use these three themes in an attempt to tie together some of the patterns that seem to emerge from the data, illuminating each of the patterns with information taken from the interviews and from the literature.

The patterns that follow paint a picture of leadership in combat and the phenomenology of the officer qua the combat leader and veteran - and especially as a moral agent. These are the patterns that seemed to arise from the answers the participants provided as the author saw fit to analyze the data.

#### Pattern 1 (Control over the environment)

The officer has a desire for control over the environment. Fighting is generally a state of confusion, so the leader does his best to control what can be controlled. This control may extend to the troops in his command, the officer's own emotions, or even the players in the combat arena. This control directly impacts the officer's combat effectiveness and the "battlefield survivability" of his unit. This term refers to a unit's ability to still be intact once the shooting has stopped.

The following examples relate to the control an officer exerts over the troops in his command. This obedience is sometimes a matter of life and death.

#### COL Brady

His first experience in combat was when they were in a helicopter with his detachment. A lieutenant was with them who was not a Pathfinder and as they were about to land he told this lieutenant 'I need to go out first' and the lieutenant didn't say a word and jumped out in front of him and as the lieutenant was jumping out he took a round right in the face and it killed him instantly. He said

after the lieutenant jumped out in front of him he couldn't take time to think about it right then or he would have wound up dead. So he went ahead and completed the mission and got back to the base then he thought about it. He thought that he had told the lieutenant not to jump out first, that he needed to jump first, but the lieutenant jumped anyway.

Considering this scenario, there are several factors that attach easily to Kontogiannis' (1996) characteristics of emergency-tempo decision-making. The consequences of failing to manage an emergency are highly stressful and potentially life threatening. In this situation, however, it was the threat to the life of another that seems to have been the greatest concern and COL Brady was of the opinion that, had he jumped out first, it would have been in such a way as to evade the enemy gunfire. There is time pressure in accomplishing tasks in order to avoid escalation of the emergency – COL Brady knew that if he failed to get his men out of the aircraft quickly, then the enemy would destroy the aircraft and everyone on it.

Existing operating procedures offer little guidance in dealing with many unfamiliar aspects of the emergency. Certainly there could be no standard operating procedure that would anticipate every possible scenario and give guidelines on how a platoon leader might react. Usually the best the military is able to do is to provide some general ideas for dealing with six to eight different situations and hope that the officer can generalize from there. To provide more guidance may, in fact, limit the officer's ability to be flexible in fluid situations, as well as inundating the officer with information overload.

One of the ways officers exercise the control necessary to establish leadership is to establish principles that allow for a more parsimonious decision. "Choosing the best man for the job" may be one of these ways, which leads to the finding that was unquestionably the most common pattern that tied all ten of the combat veterans together and distinguished them from the three officers who had never seen combat. Appendix B contains the Kohlbergian dilemma of the company commander in Korea. Bear in mind, though, that this was not an attempt to fix the officers at a particular stage of moral development. Rather, the dilemma of the company commander in Korea was used as a means of getting the veterans to think about moral decisions. These findings do seem interesting, however, and do seem to add to this research.

When asked about the dilemma, each of the ten combat veterans, leaders and chaplains alike, answered along some variation of the theme, "I'd pick the best man to do the job." Note the following examples:

Interviewer - "Should the captain order a man to stay behind, or stay behind himself, or leave nobody behind?"

LT Able - "The real answer is the one to do the job right, the man that's best qualified, knows what the hell they're doing. They'll be the one that will survive."

COL Brady - "Oh, I think what I'd try to do is not to send anybody back, but if it was required, I would send whoever I thought was the most capable of blowing up the bridge."

CHP Bobby - "...If he is going to protect his troops, then I would say he...would generally leave somebody there who's qualified to blow up the bridge and that may be one or two and they would have capability of protecting themselves. could conceivably be killed, could conceivably be taken POW, but the greater good still is him taking care of his own troops."

CPT Todd - Either of those would be the choice to make. I think you should take the guy that was going to get the job done.

CHP James - "...he should order somebody to stay back and the best guy to blow the bridge up."

COL Franks - No. I think I'd have to base it on who I thought would get the job done.

LT Blake - Sends the guy that can do the job, whoever that is. It doesn't matter about the personal condition.

COL Jack - He would pick the one he thought would do the job - best qualified to do the job - the one most likely to succeed in doing the job and that's what he would base his decision on. He'd base it on the mission, not the individual.

MAJ Mike - He said he would "pick the best man to get the job done," rather than choosing between a trouble maker or a man with a terminal illness.

OC Tom - "I'd pick the best man for the job."

Those three officers who had not seen combat gave somewhat different approaches to the moral solution:

COL Aaron - He reflected a moment before answering that he would resolve the issue by drawing straws to pick the one person who would stay behind. He decided that this would be most fair and that degree of fairness would be important to maintain unit cohesiveness after the company was safe again.

CPT Don - He vacillated between picking the trouble-maker or the terminally ill soldier and finally said he would pick the trouble-maker, "because the terminally ill guy might need some time to get his affairs in order...I don't know."

LT Matt - The lieutenant said that he would pick the guy who was terminally ill to stay behind, adding that he hoped the trouble maker, "would feel his country is important enough to die for."



These findings were not found to be consistent with other sources, though it was this issue that most clearly distinguished officers across any definable lines (combat versus non-combat) and resulted in a consistent response. The reasons for the differences in the answers are not entirely clear. In discussing this factor with the various veterans, two suggested that there is a difference between the academic answer that students debate in the classroom and the practical answer that the leader implements in combat. While students might debate the answer in erudite terms, they are not there on the battlefield with all of the factors available to them, nor do they have any of the pressures. There seems to be a difference between the philosophical and the practical.

Further questioning of the combat leaders as to whether they would choose the terminally ill man or the troublemaker typically resulted in their “broken record technique” of repeating their answer in a variety of ways, all suggesting that the correct answer was whomever could best accomplish the mission. The veterans showed they would not be constrained by the choices available. Had they limited their choices to either the terminally ill man or the troublemaker, it may have suggested a rigidity of thinking that would be inconsistent with the “on your feet” thinking necessary on the battlefield, where the answers are rarely inscribed in a book for the platoon leader to consult in the thick of battle. Perhaps the most effective person to be in charge of troops being sent into combat is someone who “colors outside the lines” and is not limited strictly to the obvious choices. The ability to “think outside the box” and devise new and creative ways to accomplish the mission is a characteristic shared by

those combat leaders who become the subject of the erudite, philosophical discussions in the classrooms of West Point.

The genesis for the answer is not entirely clear. It is clear that it is not something that the officer learned through a training program. None of the combat officers could recall where they learned this answer to be the correct one. Had this been something they had learned through their training programs, then it would be plausible to assume that the officers at the officer training program (who had never seen combat) would have stated the same answer. It seems that the answer is something that is honed in an experiential base. Plausibly, one might say that this is the most easily defensible answer, not only to others who might later call the officer's decisions into question, but for the tougher interpersonal conflict when the officer examines the decisions himself. While this answer seems to be the most parsimonious, though, it is also an answer that allows the officers to avoid choosing an action that is provided in the dilemma.

Officers often have to perform tasks for which they have received little or no prior training. Each of the combat veterans interviewed voiced the sentiment that they, at one time or another in combat, felt unprepared. This is a theme that seemed to be consistent, but the wide variety of responses on how that unprepared feeling might be rectified suggested that it would be difficult to impossible for a new lieutenant to ever feel completely at ease upon his first encounter with combat. The "trial by fire" seems to be a solemn initiation into a brutal world.

The moral training for the cadet seeking to become an officer typically involves classroom discussion on the matter. This is done by providing clear guidelines for the expected moral standard, such as "A cadet will not lie, cheat, or

steal or tolerate those who do.” Also, cases in moral reasoning are presented to the cadets and discussed in a seminar format. Additionally, the cadets are expected to become conversant in role models who have grappled with moral decisions throughout history. An example of this might be the case of SGT Alvin York who, though impressed into service during World War I as a conscientious objector, saved the lives of his fellow soldiers by shooting and killing 22 of the enemy. More common case studies are presented as well, such as the armorer who is assisting an officer in conducting an arms room inspection. The armorer and the supply sergeant are both pressuring the junior officer to simply sign off on the inventory without making them pull each of the weapons for inspection (Department of the Army, 1990). Cadet training in moral and ethical issues lasts approximately two semesters of the cadet’s academic training.

The discussion has focused on the decision-making factors involved when a soldier is in harm’s way. Getting a soldier to take a life is another matter. The opening paragraph of this article discusses the conditions that facilitate mass killings and mention the crucial factor of displacing responsibility.

“The Vietnam war machine fulfilled Sanford and Comstock’s (1971) two enabling prerequisites for the creation of mass executioners: the dehumanization of victims and social permission for collective destructiveness. As Milgram’s (1963, 1965, 1967, 1974) studies of obedience suggest, the principle of authoritative sanction functions even in the absence of warfare. Most of Milgram’s participants followed orders unquestioningly - even if it meant harming others - as long as two conditions were met: (1) the instructions came from someone in a position of authority and (2) the setting made the tormentor

dependent upon that authority. If the victim could be rendered remote or faceless, the tendency to inflict pain on command was even greater. A victim can become faceless if his head is tied in a bag; he can become remote if he is 5,000 feet below the warrior (Shatan, 1978, p. 43).

The officer is often cognizant of the fact that the killing for which he is responsible collects an emotional toll that is best divided among his command. Though he orders it, the officer is generally not the one directly responsible for the killing. In this sense, the killing is "easier said than done."

There is such a thing as too much control to the point of micro management, which can compromise a unit's effectiveness. This micro management might take the form of the colonel who hovers above his troops in a helicopter and telling them over the radio to button their chin straps on their helmets (LT Blake reported this). Such a level of control has a demoralizing effect on the troops and can extend to the point of putting the unit at risk. As stated before, some degree of flexibility is necessary to allow the combat leader to "think on his feet" as the person who is most aware of the situation.

The officer's control extends across so many areas of the soldiers' lives and has a very real impact on the stability and morale of the unit. Also, the confidence that the troops feel in their leader is an important matter of functioning and survival. If that faith is not present, neither will be the command and control necessary for the troops to follow the leader into battle. This facet of control, in turn, has direct bearing on the moral climate within the unit. COL Franks spoke to the moral influence the leader had on his subordinates.

COL Franks Davis was the squad leader - a corporal - and I was one of the...in the Marines, that squad breaks down into fire teams of four men each - you never really have four men in combat, but you still have something like three fire teams built around a Browning Automatic Rifle. And, you always had the three rifle teams even if you didn't have but three Marines in the squad - each one of them had a Browning Automatic Rifle.

Interviewer: So, Corporal Davis was your direct superior. I suppose?

COL Franks Yes, he was. I guess when it gets down to moral issues, the example of Minyard in that 3rd Squad - 3rd Platoon team in the Korean War. Once we were moving and we took ten - we crapped out alongside the road and Minyard is walking along with a gook hand stuck on his bayonet on his carbine, and he would walk up behind a guy and lay this hand over as he was laying there just kind of sleeping - rub his face with that hand - that Korean's hand, or it could've been a Chinese hand. But, I didn't think that was funny, but I have never had any schooling on that, but that's doing something with a body, even if it's the enemy's, that I had trouble with accepting it and I never really accepted Minyard because of that - because he did several things along that line. And, Corporal Davis wouldn't stand for that for a minute. And, not only made him get rid of it, but took him off to the side and chewed his ass out. And, I don't know what all was said, but I felt good that Davis did that - that he didn't let something like that happen."

Because it made one soldier feel good that Davis intervened, it is plausible to assume that other soldiers felt good about the decision as well. That, in turn, will have a small but real impact when soldiers ask themselves that crucial question, "Do I have faith in my leader?" In the above example, several of Rest's components may be called to mind (Rest, 1984). Davis was able to interpret the situation as a moral dilemma and, possibly, recognized that Minyard's actions were unsettling for at least one soldier and it was degrading to the dead body, albeit an enemy. Davis could easily have followed other courses of action, such as allowing Minyard to continue his horseplay with the severed hand. We may not know what courses of action formed Davis' constellation of choices. What Davis did, however, showed respect for the enemy dead, the laws of warfare (which clearly state that such mutilation is illegal), and Minyard's own dignity; rather than correcting Minyard in front of the others, Davis took him off to the side.

A major aspect of this control pertains to rigidly controlling the lives of the soldiers, which raises the question of whether this control is moral in nature. Kant made sharp distinctions between moral issues and non-moral ones (Kant, 1994a) and it may be difficult at first to understand how this can become a moral issue until one realizes the end purpose for that control. Military discipline has been found to be the decisive ingredient in warfare for thousands of years. The combat officer knows that if his troops are not trained properly in garrison, they will be found lacking on the field of combat. The troops may openly loathe the leader who makes them conduct rigorous physical training and endless series of drills to hone their combat skills. However, the leader who is remiss in this

training (possibly out of a desire for acceptance or wanting to please the troops) will find that his soldiers died on the battlefield because they were not properly prepared, while the more harsh leader takes fewer casualties. Imposing that control, can be viewed as, at least, a necessary condition enabling subsequent moral decision making by the officer. Issues become moral when lives are at stake. It would be accurate to say that the control becomes a moral issue if it is not established, as lives will be lost on the battlefield. If the control is implemented and fully in place, it may not necessarily be a moral issue (e.g., if the fully-trained and disciplined soldier never saw combat).

When control is taken away, it can be a very unsettling experience. Being out of control may mean that there is little combat intelligence available for the leader, it may mean the leader is wounded and recovering at a hospital away from his command (When this happened, COL Jack had his men string a telephone into the infirmary so he could keep posted on his unit), or it may mean that their position is being overrun by the enemy. LT Blake is still traumatized by memories of two different occasions when half of the men in his command died during enemy actions. In any case, the officers agreed that, without that control, loss of one's troops may well be the result.

Also note that the above statement reflects a degree of conflict between the moral responsibility the officer has towards his troops and the moral responsibility he has toward the enemy. In one hypothetical view, a "scorched earth" policy where the enemy terrain is turned into a wasteland may well make things easier on the troops (and save troop lives), but its moral correctness would

be called to question. Precedent to address this question comes may be found in an issue arising during the Spanish-American War. Tichenor (1975) relates:

“In the Philippines in 1902, Brigadier General Jacob Smith gave this order, ‘I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn. The more you kill and burn, the better you will please me. The *interior summar* must be made a howling wilderness. Also, all persons capable of bearing arms, those ten years old and older, are to be killed.’ Smith was convicted by court martial. He was sentenced, however, to be reprimanded primarily because his soldiers refused to execute his orders.”

The officer realizes that the true object of war is to effect a lasting peace between two nations. As such, the term “economy of force” is the first principle of leadership. Clearly stated, the officer knows that the best strategy in warfare is to use the minimum amount of force necessary to accomplish the mission. After all the combat is put aside, the officer must still realize that he is fighting the enemy for political reasons, not military ones. This goes back to the writings of St. Augustine around 400 A.D., who Navigating this doctrinal flux was St. Augustine, who wrote around 400 A.D. and who formulated the directive that the final goal of a just war is peace (Wakin, 1981).

Dewey (1959) discusses the moral motivational theory and demonstrated that people have a desire to act in a noble light. Other



psychologists have found that empathy forms a connectedness with the species in most people (Erikson, 1958; Hoffman, 1976). The 1989 study by Zanden (1989) showed that education leads one past prejudice to foster social responsibility and an orientation toward service. The officers do indicate that their desire is to act morally and that some degree of empathy and an orientation for social service exists even for the enemy. Officers are required to have a baccalaureate degree and those who stay in will have to pursue graduate study. Perhaps these factors work to combine in the officer some foundation of pro-social behavior upon which they can build a moral edifice.

The officer in combat takes on the role of a manager, coordinating aid and supporting fire once the unit comes into contact with the enemy. Through this, he exerts his control on his physical environment. The role of the officer as the manager on the battlefield - the executive coordinating the action and deciding where to spend his assets - is a theme that seems common among the officers, with eight officers spontaneously reporting this aspect of control. When questioned, all agreed that the officer should not find himself directly participating in the killing, but rather organizing and coordinating the efforts of those who do.

Another aspect of control is the control an officer must exert over himself. COL Jack spoke clearly to this issue.

COL Jack

“Was I scared when I started? Yeah, a little bit when I went to combat. I was scared to death but I could not show my men that I was scared. I can remember when we had a very difficult struggle fighting thinking ‘Won’t this war ever end? Is there an end coming at all?’ and I wasn’t sure whether I’d be around or not. First man I ever saw blown to bits I threw up. The second one I threw up, and then I got hard and then you wait a little bit and then you go through the same cycle again. In reading the biography on Patton, he went through the same thing. You can’t let yourself dwell on that too much. A man who says he was never scared, he was either lying or bragging. I think everybody who has ever been in combat has been scared. The question is harnessing the fear, swallowing it and doing what you’re supposed to do.”

This aspect of self-discipline is a common undercurrent of an officer’s self-view, with all of the other combat veterans reporting the same thing. All admitted freely to being scared when in combat, but they could also agree that the fact that they were alive and available to be interviewed served as a testimony to their clear thinking on the field of battle.

In addition to suppressing his own emotions, an officer must also keep it to himself if he feels the decisions of his higher echelons are less than exemplary. If the enlisted soldiers sense a discord between their platoon leader and the company commander (the platoon leader’s direct superior), a breakdown of discipline will almost certainly follow. “Maintaining one’s bearing” as an officer is something that requires constant attention. One thing this seems to do is to

allow some distance to be maintained between the officer and the troops. This distance then allows for the officer to be the one giving the orders that send troops to kill or be killed. The issue of control, then, provides a necessary context which allows the other two patterns to develop.

#### Pattern 2 (the officer is responsible for troops)

An officer feels responsible for the troops he leads into combat. To some degree, this may be a factor of the control demonstrated in Pattern 1. CPT Todd's story seems to dovetail with the need for control that the first pattern demonstrated and how that need for control couples with preservation of self and others to motivate him to learn his job.

#### CPT Todd

" I learned a lot in 6 months [during his officer candidate school and officer basic course]. Got to Viet Nam to promptly find out that I didn't know jack shit!! (chuckle) You really and truly do lead because, as a brand new second lieutenant who is 20 or 21 years old, going into a unit where people have already been shot at a few times, you aren't going to go tell them to do much. You better darn well get out in front of them and hope that they follow you. And, they frequently don't (chuckle) because they know what you are doing is stupid and wrong and they aren't gonna do it because they have been there long enough to recognize it. So, if you're really lucky, you get to slink back to where they are and avoid further embarrassment or possibly worse. And, after a relatively short period of time, you begin to learn some of the same things they know. The

training program there was much more beneficial than the one in the States--they had much higher levels of an incentive. A (chuckle) weekend pass didn't mean near as much in the second school as it did in the first. And, it didn't matter how many pushups you had to do in OCS, believe me, it didn't matter--the punishment level was much higher, so you learned quick."

For CPT Todd, then, that responsibility fueled his desire to learn everything he could about his job as a platoon leader so that he would not let his team down. All of the combat officers expressed similar feelings along these lines, where their motivation stemmed from a sincere desire to uphold their subordinates.

LT Able: The other things where my moral dilemma came to a head, oh our platoons were and our companies were oversized and I had about 80 of these young men in my platoon. I'm a second lieutenant and the first in combat because you're the one that's responsible for their well being in giving them directions to do the right thing. I was somewhat overwhelmed with my responsibility. I mean just to think that all these lives were my responsibility even though others up the line shared that same responsibility. Like I said reality was very bright and very clear as you stood looking at these young guys in the eyes and they had wives, families, sweethearts, all kinds of stuff and you recognized that if you were out on a patrol or on area and then you went under attack you make the wrong

decision you can cause them to lose their lives and that was the first, that was my hardest one to get over and I finally just got to the point where I said to myself that I'm just gonna have to do the very best I can and hopefully, God willing, I won't lose anybody but I'm just gonna do the best I can, that's all I can do right now. Otherwise you get immobilized.

Here is a theme that was central to all 13 officers, where the combat leader must balance the values of completing the mission and of caring for his men. If the scales tip too heavily to one side or the other, the unit will become ineffective. The aspect of being immobilized also seems to relate to the discussion offered by some officers concerning the difference between the philosophical discussions of the classroom and the more practical, utilitarian thinking that gets the job done in the combat arena.

CPT Todd also spoke of the immobilizing aspect of being overwhelmed in his job. Showing sincere loyalty to subordinates and upholding the troops was a feeling that ran deeply through the combat veterans. Conversely, any sense of "having let the troops down" is difficult for an officer to bear, as CPT Todd shows.

CPT Todd: Great sense of failure, my sense of failure is that I was inadequately trained. I was inadequately prepared emotionally to do the job that had to be done. I was inadequately equipped. We were so ghastly, with the level of preparation that was criminal. That wasn't my fault, that was criminal at levels above me. The training was criminal at the level above me, I mean criminal.

Probably should have been tried, people should be tried for putting troops on the ground that aren't trained or equipped and prepared. Emotionally well maybe not, I don't know that you can train somebody at that level of emotion, but the rest of it should never have been permitted to happen.

Immanuel Kant discussed using others as an end in themselves or as a means only. One veteran had his perspective firmly in place through his 40-plus years in the Marines and seems to find how he can direct his troops into harm's way and do so as an end in itself. While his approach to moral problem-solving may not be aligned with principled, post-conventional thought, it is apparent that he has struggled with these toughest of moral issues and developed an answer that allowed for the greatest flexibility of application as he carried out his duties.

COL Franks: Yeah, the bottom line of all that, though. I think, when you wrestle with it a little bit and after you've been with the thought a little bit, you realize that's why we are all in this uniform - to take the fight to the enemy. So, that young Marine that's going forward - that's going to die - that I'll never see again, signed up for that very thing - to take the fight to the enemy. So, it's not me and my choice and my decision for personal gain to send him forward into the enemy's guns - we're both in the uniform and, uh, neither of us would have it any other way. Take the fight to the enemy and it's a known factor that there will be a cost - there will be the dead and

the wounded, the maimed for life, and, in some cases, those are the hardest. But, I think that when a commander wrestles with that thought, that it's not him sending them forward, it's the whole Marine idea - that's why the taxpayers paid you all that money all that time and trained you to where you are - to do this thing that you've got to do. And, because somebody falls, that's the price that's extracted and that poor individual - or worse, his family - is the one that has to pay for it. And, of course, family is the one that really hurts because the dead man, I guess, has no feelings, but... And, his buddies that he leaves behind - that make it through it.

This perspective shows some of the "wallowing" that will be seen in the third pattern and, in the strictest military sense, seems to have been the most effective view in not only getting the combat leader to do his job, but to be able to live with it afterwards. Also, it shows a clear standard for what constitutes justice on the battlefield.

In this pattern, the officer shows a great deal of responsibility for those he leads into combat. As such, there is often a strong emotional attachment that the officer feels for his troops. His loyalty to them fuels his desire to do his very best and to thoroughly learn his job and perform his duties.

The antithesis of that loyalty to his troops is his directive to place those same troops into harm's way. How these differing constructs become synthesized is often at the root of retrospective conflict and guilt that an officer feels for his actions in combat. Out of the feeling of responsibility the officer has for his

combat troops, then, is a feeling of guilt when his troops are wounded. CPT Todd spoke of his own mental anguish in the years after his service in Vietnam.

CPT Todd: You feel like laying down and pulling a poncho over your head and not letting anybody talk to you, which is what some people do and probably what all of us have done to some extent. years afterwards, just rolled up in our poncho and not let anybody talk to us but that is the single most...That time frame, that one day. was the turning point for everything that happened in my life. I think that that splendid isolation that I was sinking in was one that I sought for many years after that. I spent many years in deep grief over each one of these kids. I was able to blank it out completely.

Interviewer: What was it like for you to send troops into combat?

CPT Todd: It's the hardest thing in the world you can do. And you will be grief stricken over it for the rest of your life but you have to do it.

The other combat leaders reported the same moral regret. Another common theme in responses involving a leader's troops dying under his command involved the leader wishing he could have traded places with the ones who died. A second-hand perspective comes from Chaplain Bobby in dealing with a combat leader facing the most harrowing sense of remorse from accidental fratricide.

Interviewer: I want to ask the same question about what problems did the soldiers bring to you, but this time, let's focus on the officers, and,



I notice there's a little bit of difference that officers have in combat in saying to one of their subordinates, "You run over to this position," and the soldier stands up to do it and gets shot in the process. The officer then has a lot of guilt about that because the death was his responsibility.

CHP Bobby: Uh-huh. I saw some elements of that, yes. Let me give you a major example that stayed in my memory all these years. Do you know who COL \_\_\_\_ is? He's the founder, or the head of, what was the group? What did we call them in the Army? Um, the Special Action Group - not Special Forces - um, the group that went to Iran to bring the out prisoners, you know, try to do the rescue - they had a special name. COL \_\_\_\_ was an airborne ranger colonel out of the 101st Airborne when I was there. When I knew him in Viet Nam, he was a battalion commander - lieutenant colonel. Um, but as an O-6 [colonel], he commanded the Army portion of the group that flew into Iran to try to get the prisoners out. And, he was the one who actually said to them to abort the mission after the planes had crashed into each other. We had two or three battalions out in the Ashau Valley and heavy contact, and I was out there with them for part of that time - was with the sister battalion to his - he was commanding the 2nd Battalion with the 327th Infantry and he was up in the firebase, and I was on the firebase waiting to catch a helicopter back to the unit in the jungle, and I was standing beside him and he was listening to a radio. One

of his companies came under fire and they had called in gunships [heavily armed helicopters] to help them, and, uh, suddenly his unit commander was yelling, "Call them off, call them off - they're hitting us, they're hitting us!" And, it was friendly fire. COL \_\_\_\_ got it stopped. Talked to the company commander, whom I knew very well, talked to him on the radio, saying, "Okay. cool it, calm down, find out what's going on, protect your wounded and come back up on the radio and tell me what's happening." Uh. so I stayed there with COL \_\_\_\_ and he started talking - I was the only one with him - he started talking about this, um, this battalion. or this company commander and his concern that the guy wouldn't be able to deal with everything that was happening. and his feeling of loss if any of those soldiers got torn up. Well, when his unit commander came back on, he said - COL \_\_\_\_ asked him. "What have you got wounded?" And the guy said, "I'm prepared to evacuate six football teams." Now, he used that figure for security reasons on a radio. Do you know how many that is?

Interviewer: Sixty-six?

CHP Bobby: Sixty-six. You've got an infantry company with eighty-seven. How many does that leave? Not very many... Then, COL \_\_\_\_ put down the radio and he turned around and started...he laid his head on the sandbags and started beating his head and his hands against the sandbags and started crying. Did that for two or three

minutes, just really bawling, and then pulled out his handkerchief, wiped his face and said, "Sorry."

This was the only report that discussed an instance of fratricide specifically. Note, however, that nine of the ten combat veterans had a strong feeling of remorse so as to hold themselves responsible for deaths regardless of which side pulled the trigger.

Other sources seem to report similar sentiments of attachment to the troops and profound remorse when troops are lost. The following quote helps to illuminate the remorse that the combat leader feels at the loss of a fellow soldier and the trepidation with which he sends a soldier into battle.

"For me to lose a friend in combat, in battle, is like losing part of my own body. I personally take it very, very hard. It takes me many, many months to recover. I probably develop some way of keeping it from being shown outside, but one way I deal with it is I stay in very close relationships with his family and the people who remain after him and I try to participate in any effort of keeping his name, the stories about him, alive. People ask me how can I send a man to die? I think it is possible for me because I know that I am in the same circumstances and could die tomorrow and, if I live to see tomorrow, I am lucky, but I also know that I must live with the thought of those young men I sent out to die. That is the only way I am able to do it." General Yosi. Israeli Defense Forces (Soldiers, 1989).

The officer, then, is placed in an unenviable position where he must bond with his troops with a blend of affection and responsibility. He must also be willing to give the orders that will result in the deaths of those men.

No matter how well the leader is trained or how contentiously he performs his duties, the most unchanging part of warfare is that people die. The distance that is part of an officer's bearing exists so that the officer may give the orders that send his men into mortal danger, then shield the officer from the guilt that follows their deaths. The very best of leaders will make some mistakes that will continue to plague them for years to come. Most combat leaders go through some processing akin to that of a football coach conducting a post-game analysis to help the team do better next time. Usually, there is also some thinking on the officer's part that if he had done something differently, deaths could have been prevented.

### Pattern 3 (distance vs. wallowing)

Distance seems to loosen the bonds of what is morally acceptable, while proximity seems to produce a "wallow" factor of remorse over the killing. This distance can be conceptualized in three different ways. It can imply the physical proximity that the soldier has between himself and the enemy he kills. "Distance" may also mean the time that separates the soldier's actions from his memory of them in the present day. Lastly, it can be taken to mean the emotional distance that separates the soldier from the enemy he kills (as mentioned in the earlier discussion of Sanford and Comstock's 1971 research).

CPT Todd talks here about the emotional distance when he was invited to speak at a school for juvenile offenders (often gang members who had committed drive-by shootings).

CPT Todd: I've also worked at the something we call the Academy which is where we've got the kids that have been thrown out of the high school and most of them were pretty rough kids. I said, "You know, you've been real tough, probably done some real tough things, but have you ever wallowed in it?" I said, "That's the difference." That was a real effective way to get everybody's attention. This kid was, he had been accused of some drive by shootings. I don't know that he had actually done them but if he hadn't physically done them he was probably in the car. He probably really didn't care whether somebody had gotten killed out there, it didn't matter at all, but he hadn't had their brains and things splattered all over him.

These "up-close-and-personal" images seem to be the hardest for the combat veteran to forget. The more the distance between the killer and the victim is closed, the more psychological trauma seems to result. This distance seems to protect some of the players on the battlefield from the emotional scars this "wallowing" produces. As a collective whole, pilots seem to carry little of the emotional burden shouldered by the troops on the ground. Contrary to popular

opinion, the B-29 pilots who dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki exhibit no indications of psychological problems (Grossman, 1995).

Direct participation in killing is not a necessary factor in producing this debilitating rumination that results from wallowing. OC Tom talks in the second person about this remorse in the combat veteran who witnesses civilian deaths during Operation Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf.

OC Tom: In Iraq, the U.S. bombed a civilian building - Iraq had moved civilians out and had put military equipment in. 450 civilians who were told by the Iraqis to find shelter in the building were bombed in one instance and it really screwed up the guy who painted the building [He is referring here to designating the target with a laser spot. The SEAL is told which building to "paint" with the laser and he then makes sure that the laser remains on the building until the Coalition aircraft has successfully demolished the building with a laser-guided bomb. This usually means that the SEAL is painting and watching the whole affair from the higher roof of another nearby building.]. It really fucked him up bad. That guy had to be transferred to non-combat duties. As a sniper, you assume the target is legal and legitimate.

Creating an emotional distance from the person who is to be killed seems to be the gateway to being able to kill the enemy. People who grew up working on a ranch know the expression, "Don't get too close to the cattle," referring to keeping a healthy emotional distance from an animal that will eventually be sent

to the slaughterhouses. Shades of that distance exist between the officer and his soldiers. It exists to a much greater degree between the soldier and the enemy whom he must kill.

Interviewer: I'm wondering, when you went through that enemy position after the artillery attack, was there any emotion attached with that?

LT Able: Sure, I mean even though they were terrible enemies. It's still something to see that they're people, are lifeless, and you don't know if it's because of whether you called it in or somebody else called it in, but you can't help but feel some kind of a tinge of moral pain. Of course, I was not in combat all that long. I would imagine those guys that were in WWII and fighting for two years, they must have been absolutely numb.

Dehumanization seems to be a major component of that distance.

Interviewer: Well, that brings me to another question I wanted to ask. What were some of the views that you have - first, of the Koreans, and later, the Vietnamese. Was there any particular view that you espoused?

COL Franks: As the enemy? No, in that environment, they're really not human. They are something that has to be contended with and, uh, I never had any problem with drawing a bead on one and dropping him. I never thought twice about it because that's the job - that was the thing that had to be done. I never really thought too much about the enemy.

LT Able: Well I was kind of indoctrinated into a strangely...the South Koreans were good people, nice people. Didn't want to fraternize with them too much. Now there was opportunity if you were looking of a Korcan hooker, but their food and their whole culture was so foreign to me and everything. They were nice people and I was glad we were there to protect them and all that stuff. I had that kind of glossy thinking. But if they were North Korean. why, of course they were some kind of less-than-human person, which was part of that indoctrination.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

LT Able: And particularly if they were Chinese they just didn't come high up off of it. They kind of were in the same category. The Chinese they were better fighters, we knew that from the beginning. When you're up against Chinese outfits you'd better be on your toes. because they were good. The North Koreans were pretty sloppy. they used broadcast epistles over loud speakers, everything. so they used to keep us in stitches. So we thought they weren't being serious. But the Chinese, they would come after you so you knew that you had to get with it to get with the Chinese but even so because they were two things, they were Chinese and communist: "There's communists in our state department, senator!" There were communists over there too. But there was a double hatred. And I spent my studies of that since then certainly, like in the



holocaust how the Germans, everybody, felt about Jews, gypsies and Hungarian people. They were somewhat less than human and if you can degrade a person to less than a fully human status, it's much easier to kill them.

Interviewer: I think it's interesting that on your way to Korea, before you got there, it was common to hear "gooks," "slant eyes," "rice eaters." and then you had to work with South Koreans. Was it difficult to make that distinction?

LT Able: No, it's pretty funny now that you make that...this is the crazy thing about indoctrination, or call it nationalism if you'd like, that if you're on our side, you're okay. I may not always like the way you dress or look but by golly if you're gonna fight with me and you're gonna be on my team, you're alright. I'll drink your saké with you or whatever, but if you're one of those strange folks that are fighting us - and particularly if you're communist and Oriental - it's not okay. It's the psychology, you probably read up on this, by golly this is what motivates people to go ahead and get into combat and kill people. If you think every time you eliminate some of those people that you're doing your country and the world a favor, wow, you're on a high mission. A theory which I subscribe to now is that unless you can dehumanize your enemy, you can't kill them.

This last point is one that is well made. To be able dehumanize the enemy before one must kill them opens the way to justifying the killing afterwards. It does, however, leave the door open for an array of possible conflicts and inconsistencies. There are countless stories from the battlefield of a soldier who shoots the enemy and then comes across some item that makes the enemy's "human-ness" confront him in stark reality. For LT Able, this moment came when he saw an enemy body lying on a stretcher, covered by a sheet, with the arm sticking out to the side. The arm was graced with a wedding ring, which was sufficient to cause that emotional distance to crumble.

Taking the "human-ness" out of the enemy can be accomplished in several ways.

COL Franks: This one time going out by truck, and I'm seated on the tailgate - at the tailgate - and we just went around a sharp hairpin turn on this dirt, mountain trail. I became aware that the thing that we had just passed over was a human body, mashed as flat as that paper laying in that cold, that frozen dust of that road. An enemy body, but that bothered me the fact that all these trucks in this convoy just kept tooling around that turn - running over that body and, literally, just made a paper doll out of it, mashed it that flat. That bothered me for a good bit until I reasoned it out, and, on that mountain trail, the driver, one, wouldn't see it until he was already on top of it, and if he'd stopped the way we rolled - and then to kind of count our ambushes - if he'd stopped that quickly, it would have been a

pile-up of trucks behind him. Then, I took that thought one step further, and that could've been exactly what the enemy planned to have us do - lay that body out there and the trucks stopping and opening up with an ambush. So, that was the only thing to do and that's war and that's the way war is, but it does tend to make us a little bit...we tend to lose some of the human element in the individual, and as long as we are bothered by it like I was, I guess that's all right. But, if we ever get to the point where that doesn't bother you, then I think we need to be concerned. And, I see that in our society today, in young people killing each other. I don't think we have that kind of concern for human life. But, is that along the lines of the moral...that's not really decision making. All I'm doing is sitting there on the tailgate watching something that's already happened, but it had happened, and I was uncomfortable with the happenings.

LT Blake: No, 'cause a lot of it just flew over your head. I remember the sign that said, "Our job is to help you help Charlie give his life for his country." I remember that. You were talking about morals and all that shit. I'll tell you a story. I never participated in any atrocities. I never cut any ears off or anything like that. There was our battalion - we were called the "Black Lions," first of the 28th Infantry, and somehow, there was a tradition started. We wore stars over there and you know, you hear all this shit - well, they got

a bounty on our heads and all that stuff - probably not true, they didn't give a shit, just get outta my country. Everybody carried toothbrushes - extra toothbrushes. And when you killed a gook you stuck the toothbrush in their nose and you kicked the shit out of - you kicked it up in his head. And you'd leave him there with a toothbrush in his head, in his nose. Most of my guys did that shit. I didn't ever do it.

Interviewer: How was that significant?

LT Blake: I don't know. It was just paybacks, I guess. For how we felt like they treated us, or how they would treat us.

Interviewer: Well, this is interesting. I mean, on one hand you're talking about the NVA as being...

LT Blake: Yeah, they're good soldiers.

Interviewer: That was sort of dehumanizing - maybe they're an inferior breed?

LT Blake: How else can you - how you gonna kill them if you don't think they're worth a shit!? And, they're trying to kill you.

When that distance is closed and the victim is suddenly "human again," though the victim be the enemy, a certain angst or "wallowing" seems to be produced.

The world of the sniper presents a moral perspective that is a sharp contrast to that of the infantryman at this juncture. OC Tom, who was a sniper in the Navy Seals during the Persian Gulf War and then in counter-drug operations in Latin America, explained that, if a sniper is doing his job correctly, no one will ever be shooting back. This puts the "wet work" of a sniper – killing an unarmed

enemy in cold blood – a hairline away from murder, but for the fact that the orders for these actions come from the authority of a sovereign nation.

For the infantryman, however, it is clear that he either kills the enemy or he will be killed by the enemy. This is an important distinction. A supply sergeant who had been in Vietnam laughed at the label of “conscientious objector.” He had known many boys who professed that they were conscientious objectors when they came to Vietnam and would never, under any circumstances, be made to kill another human. As soon as the first Viet Cong bullet or bombshell landed next to them, however, they were flat on their stomachs unloading their magazines at the VC with all the relish and enthusiasm of a Hollywood war hero. They realized that they either kill the enemy or they themselves will die. If a sniper is doing his job correctly, however, no one will ever be shooting back. Sometimes even the most outspoken proponents for non-violence may concede that killing is necessary.

LT Able: Well see, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a pastor for years and didn't believe in that [the Nazi regime] and of course it was through his family connections - his father was a psychiatrist and had all kinds of...he was able to evade the draft. but he was one of those who was part of the conspiracy to kill Hitler. The reason, his rationale was, as much as he abhorred killing, he felt that the killing of one man would save literally millions of lives. (53)

Note that Sergeant Alvin York, the most decorated hero of World War I and recipient of the Medal of Honor, was flatly opposed to killing when he was impressed into martial service. In his unique situation, however, he saw the

deaths of the 22 Germans he killed as the only way to save the lives of his men (Department of the Army, 1990, pp. 26-27).

The time component of the distance seems to show that the starkness of the moral dilemmas lessens as time goes by, thus taking the edge off of some of the more disturbing memories a combat veteran may have. There is no assurance that this buffering effect will actually take place, however, as LT Blake showed in a very emotional moment discussing the troops he lost 30 years prior:

LT Blake: I see their faces every fucking day - I get out of bed and put my feet on the floor and I see their faces and they all died in pain. It was really - it was very, very bad - they hurt when they died.

Another important “time” consideration is that the data gathered in this research were only meant to be a “snapshot” in time. This study was not longitudinal in nature and it may be the case that the answers of these veterans would have been different ten years before or after these interviews. Having said that, however, it also became apparent that most of the memories these veterans had were deeply ingrained and they had often replayed the events in their own minds (even if they never discussed them with others) so that the memories became a memorized story to some extent that the veteran was reciting for this researcher.

LT Blake’s experience, however, is similar to that of Audie Murphy, the most decorated American hero of World War II, who was wounded three times and was credited with killing 240 German soldiers. Until his death in 1971, he was plagued by nightmares about his combat experiences and slept with a loaded pistol under his pillow. When asked by an interviewer how combat soldiers

manage to survive a war, he replied, "I don't think they ever do" (Hendin & Pollinger-Haas, 1984).

### Discussion

Hopefully, the results section has provided the reader with some appreciation of what a leader in combat must face. Bear in mind, however, that this information is being collected from an etic sense. A common theme that ran through many of the soldiers' stories is that they felt inadequately prepared for battle and for what they must face when their lives are threatened. Perhaps an emic approach is the only platform appropriate for such a study, though placing a research psychologist in the position of an infantry platoon leader would be a sure recipe for the military blunder of our age. The most pressing need for training in the military is skill training under conditions that closely approximate combat (Janis, 1949). At its best, however, such training can only provide a shadowy view as to what moral dilemmas await the officer in the area of combat.

Currently, the military relies upon the Joint Readiness Training Center at Ft. Polk, Louisiana, and the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, California, to prepare soldiers for the rigors of battle. Combat conditions are simulated through the use of sophisticated laser gear worn by each soldier and even by some vehicles and aircraft. Soldiers "shoot" at the opposing force (OPFOR) troops in a complex "laser tag" battlefield. Emphasis is placed mostly in combat skills in a virtual video game, where soldiers are rejuvenated within 24 hours of being "killed." With only shadowy notions of mortality, little attention is given to morality.

This is not to say, however, that such topics have been abandoned by the military. Current doctrine in the U.S. Army's elite XVIII Airborne Corps, headquartered at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, calls for mandatory annual training in the rules of engagement (dubbed "RAMP-ROE" training). Soldiers are also expected to carry cards with them delineating the rules of engagement and instructions on how to measure force. The contents of the card are listed in Appendix D. How much of this training is internalized, however, is not fully understood.

Is principled thought possible in the line officer? Most would invariably conclude that post-conventional thinking is inconsistent with the demands of the military. Certainly the military will never be the wellspring of humanity, tolerance, and sensitivity. However, some beginnings of formal operations in moral thought were gleaned from some of the comments. COL Brady stated that he refused "to do anything like cut ears off or anything cause I didn't want that sort of thing done to me." COL Franks had a black-and-white philosophy that guided his thoughts when debating moral issues of killing or sending men to die. COL Franks:

Yeah, the bottom line of all that, though, I think, when you wrestle with it a little bit and after you've been with the thought a little bit, you realize that's why we are all in this uniform - to take the fight to the enemy. So, that young Marine that's going forward - that's going to die - that I'll never see again, signed up for that very thing - to take the fight to the enemy. So, it's not me and my choice and my decision for personal



gain to send him forward into the enemy's guns – we're both in the uniform and, uh, neither of us would have it any other way.

Perhaps COL Franks' name will never be listed in the same ranks as post-conventional, stage 6 thinkers, but the utilitarian mechanics of COL Franks' argument stand to reason as well: for the job that has to be done. COL Franks has a solid philosophy in place for dispatching the duties of his office. When it comes to protecting the nation's interests, most would also agree that having Mother Theresa and Dietrich Bonhoeffer "standing on the wall" would do little to provide the deterrent force upon which so much of our nation's policy relies. While principled thought is certainly possible with the line officer (wrestling with moral dilemmas almost inevitably results in stage progression), it may not be seen as desirable by those giving the orders.

The results support the notion that the officer has a significant impact on the moral climate of the unit. Moral training for the officers seems to play only a bit part in the factors that go into a moral decision, however. Few of the officers were able to recall more than sketchy details of training in ethics they had received as cadets. While honor code violations are a major component of service academy life ("A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal nor tolerate those who do"), it is unknown how such training translates to the more complex moral nature of battle. Would training in morals and ethics impact the officer's moral decision making? Piaget (1964) and Kohlberg (1958) both demonstrated that wrestling with cognitive tasks leads to stage progression as long as above-mode reasoning is present (Berkowitz & Keller, 1994). Perhaps the current format of military moral training may change, but its usefulness is certainly established.

The preceding text, while offering only a glimpse of the life of the combat leader, shows how thoroughly conversant with moral decision-making the junior officer must be. The stakes are not measured in shares of stock or economic indicators; rather, they are measured in which cots are empty when the patrol returns to its base and in the faces of the men whom the officer must lead his every waking hour.

Most of the decisions shown here took place in the naturalistic setting. In 1977, Janis & Mann reported on a vigilant style, where a decision is rendered after careful and thorough due process. In the military jargon, however, such a decision would not be "field expedient." It is the officer's duty to render a quick and effective decision based on what he knows at that time. Becoming bogged down in the process of getting to that point would mean a loss of lives, while at the same time the officer longs for the luxury of having the time to think matters through in such meticulous detail. Instead, the officer has to bow to the "go with what you know" philosophy.

Another principle predominant in martial service is, "go with what you've got," a maxim that often relates to who is serving in a unit. For some elite units, such as the Rangers or Special Forces, personnel selection is demanding and rigorous, developed through careful testing procedures. For the majority of those in today's understaffed military, though (the U.S. Army alone is 20,000 short in its recruiting goal), the luxury of being able to pick and choose exists only in one's imagination. Personnel selection, perhaps as proposed by Hogan and Lesser (1996), offers little to a personnel-hungry military.

Is there a “right answer” that provides some assurance as to the outcome of the junior officer’s moral dilemmas? It would seem that the military’s reliance lays in the Recognition-Primed Decision model (Klein, 1996) and, through continuous drilling in military skills, the leader can be taught to react to a variety of situations. Whether the automatic, trained response is also moral, however, remains open to debate.

There are authors who would classify decisions into such categories as premature closure, or rendering a decision before all possible alternatives have been considered, nonsystematic scanning (disorganized consideration of alternatives), or temporal narrowing (allocating insufficient time to considering each decision alternative) (Keinan, 1987; Keinan et al., 1987). Given such constraints of time and the critical importance of action on the officer’s part, however (every second he delayed, more men would die), it is understandable why quick decisions, sometimes perhaps employing simplistic decision rules, are made.

It was evident from the interviews that the foremost concern of these leaders lay in their troops. Their goal was centered on accomplishing the missions set before them, but caring for their troops remained a central focus, both during the mission and after it was over. With so much responsibility focused toward the troops in their charge, the officer is often inclined to take personal responsibility when one of his troops is injured or killed. While rational arguments may say that death is a common side effect of war, impressing the point on an infantry officer is not always so easily effected.

Another point that dovetails with the notion of being responsible for one's troops is that of being responsible for making decisions. This seemed apparent through the discussion of Kohlberg's dilemma of the company commander in Korea. The combat veteran officers seemed to feel empowered to be the one making the decision and also seemed loathe to yield that power, apparent from their disdain of the idea of drawing straws to decide who should stay behind.

The line drawn between the veteran combat officer and the officer who has never seen combat was clearly drawn from their responses to the Kohlberg dilemma. Why this was the case, however, is unclear. The veterans unanimously gave some variation of the statement, "I'd pick the best man to do the job," while the non-combat officers were unable to reproduce this answer. It is doubtful that the veterans' response was some deeply ingrained "party line," as the non-veterans were cadre at an officer training program. Were it the party line, this would be where such indoctrination would start. Some similarity of combat experience seems to be at work and this experience is something that carries across time and situations, from World War II Germany to southwest Asia in 1991. This answer may be closely linked with the first pattern (desire for control) and may reflect how controlled the officer is in his thought processes. This may be a product of some degree of training the officer has received or some level of discipline the military system has imposed. How one might establish that control, however, is a matter for future research.

The appropriateness of categorizing data into three patterns is a matter of debate. The three patterns seemed sufficient to cover and organize the data. It was noted previously that patterns ranged anywhere from one to approximately

150, but three does still seem to have illuminated what it is like for an officer to weigh moral dilemmas while leading troops into combat. Note the concluding remarks of Bradley Watson (1999), who stated, "The military ultimately draws from, and is a reflection of, the society of which it is a part (p. 68)." As the soldiers in today's military are drawn from the larger society, it may not always be possible for one to separate the actions of the military from the general consensus of the nation. Consider the historical context of the cavalry outposts in the early American West after the War of 1812. The feeling of Manifest Destiny encouraged Americans to seek new land in the west, often at the expense of Native American claims to those territories. The cavalry outposts were design to protect the settlers from Indian raids and further encourage westward expansion. This policy has since been criticized as being rather strong-armed and unfair to the indigenous population. Many decades later, the U.S. policy in Vietnam drew similar criticism.

One possible conclusion of this research is that the combat officer must have highly efficient decision-making skills if he is to perform his duties. "Thinking too much" may well work against the officer's effectiveness in an emergency. The system seems to reward the officer who has a well-rehearsed praxis in mind for how he must react to conditions on the battlefield. This system, however, is sometimes lacking in helping the officer to cope with his decisions in retrospect, when he does have the time to fire his decisions in the crucible for their moral rightness.

The officers varied widely in the context of Rest's 1979 components of a moral decision. Some seemed to have an acute sense of when a situation was

morally offensive (such as the officer observing a soldier knocking the teeth out of the enemy dead) and took action against it. Others seemed to have never reached the crucial first stage to recognize that a moral dilemma was presenting itself. Where these soldiers were in terms of Kohlberg's stages of moral development (1958), however, is open to discussion. Perhaps future research will examine this to show where the mode lies and where moral reasoning is most effective in a strict utilitarian sense.

There is an extensive body of literature (Driskell & Salas, 1991; Keinan, 1987; Klein, 1996; Orasanu & Connolly 1993) that focuses on making decisions in emergency situations and under stress. None of these studies, however, use combat leaders as participants nor do they focus on the unique problems the combat leader must face. While the deliberation to take one life is the subject of scrutiny (Haney, Sontag, & Costanzo, 1994), the decision to send subordinates to their deaths or direct the killing of others while in lethal conditions seems to be an area under-served by psychological research. What are the factors that are most crucial to the combat leader rendering such decisions? Is there a decision-making model that most effectively assimilates one's knowledge about the situation and assists the officer in arriving at a course of action? When decisions are made to take a life (or to cause someone to give up their life), what coping strategies are used with best effect when the officer analyzes his actions and decisions later? Perhaps subsequent research will seek to further illuminate our understanding of this area and assist in gaining clarification on the moral and decision-making schemata of the combat officer.

To further emphasize the point, it was this author's disappointing discovery during the search of the literature that very little attention is given to the infantry officer in the psychological research, particularly as pertains to moral reasoning and decision-making style. The reasons for this are not well understood, but it seems that the military focus in psychological research swings to those jet fighter pilots and submarine commanders who, though their work is no less important in a martial sense, experience less of the psycho-moral morass that so often plagues the memories of the infantry officer. Even in the extremely limited population of combat veterans presented in this study it is evident that the lives lost under the direction of any one of the officers - both enemy and friendly dead - extracted a heavier toll in terms of human life than the majority of civil aviation mishaps. Furthermore, the issues with which they must wrestle are on a scale far grander and in excess of the dilemmas that a fighter pilot or submarine commander could even postulate.

Having identified an area of research that has little supply from which to draw, yet great demand for the fruits of psychology's labor, it is the ardent hope of this writer that more will be done in this area in the years ahead. A downsizing military that has experienced a continual increase in missions over the past ten years has become increasingly familiar with high operational tempo running hand-in-hand with near-phrenetic levels of stress. Peacekeeping missions pose new moral challenges for today's officer. Will the field of psychology provide new answers?

In the First World War, psychologists asked, "What can we do to help the war effort?" and the practice of assessment and selection was born. With similar

sentiments, the question is again to be asked by this field today. Perhaps our infantry leaders will stand in better stead to recognize and manipulate moral decisions under battlefield conditions. Perhaps those same leaders will be more advantageously poised to live with the consequences of their decisions once the battlefield is but a memory.

By way of summary, it is this author's conviction that the majority of the moral regret in this world stems not from actions one has taken, but from actions not taken.



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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

- Who were the most significant moral influences in your life? Your moral role models? Were your morals shaped through church, school, your family...some other moral influence?
- How was your conduct at home and at school?
- How long have you been (were you) in the Army?
- (If drafted) - How did you find out you were drafted?
- (If not) - Why did you decide to go into the service?
- What was your feeling toward the Army prior to your enlistment?
- What training did you receive in morals prior to Vietnam/Korea/WWII/Gulf War (family, church, school, officer training)?
- When did you find out you were going to Korea? What were your reactions?
- Before you got into combat, what did you think it was going to be like? What did you think it would be like to be in combat?
- What kind of unit were you in?
- What was your view of the moral nature of Korea? View of the Koreans?
- What was your experience of combat? (Where you saw action, what years, your position)
- What moral situations did you encounter? Decisions made? How do you feel now about the decisions you made?
- What could you have done differently to feel better about what you did do?
- What were some of the toughest things you did?
- What are your most vivid memories?
- Is there a time when you felt particularly good about a moral decision you made?
- Is there a time when you felt particularly bad?
- Was there a time you remember being the most frightened?
- Was there a situation that you found yourself most afraid of doing wrong? What does "wrong" mean?
- If you had to decide again on the moral situations you faced, would you change your decisions?
- If you were going to prepare someone (a junior officer or cadet) to do what you had to do, what preparation would you want them to have? What would you want them to know?
- Did (or How did) combat change your moral structure?
- One veteran commented that he felt he didn't have to make moral choices, that the repetition in training was what did a lot of his deciding for him. Could you comment on that?
- Another veteran commented that you go to war because of a flag, but you fight because of your buddies. Could you comment on that?

Kohlberg's components of moral reasoning include the following:

1 - reward and punishment - It's wrong because I'll get punished if I do it

2 - "scratch your back" - What can you do for me? What do I need to do for you?

3 - social pressure - What do most other people do in this instance?

4 - law and order - What rules are in place to govern this situation?

5 - societal good - I did it for the common good

6 - principled thought - An overriding maxim is used in moral interpretations, like, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Do you feel you can fit your behavior into any of the above categories? How so?

Rest's components of rendering a moral decision are: 1) realization of a moral dilemma, 2) formulation of moral choices, 3) deciding on a moral plan, and, 4) executing that plan. Can you comment on whether this bears relevance to the decisions you made? Do you find your thinking fell into any of these components?

If you were conducting this research, what questions would you ask to tap into the moral reasoning of combat officers?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Do you know of anyone else with your experiences who might also be willing to be interviewed?

Appendix B  
Kohlberg's Dilemma

In Korea, a company of Marines was greatly outnumbered and was retreating before the enemy. The company had crossed a bridge over a river, but the enemy were still mostly on the other side. If someone went back to the bridge and blew it up as the enemy soldiers were coming over it, it would weaken the enemy. With the head start the rest of the men in the company would have, they could probably then escape. But the man who stayed back to blow up the bridge would probably not be able to escape alive; there would be about a 4 to 1 chance that he would be killed. The captain of the company has to decide who should go back and do the job. The captain himself is the man who knows best how to lead the retreat. He asks for volunteers, but no one will volunteer. Should the captain order a man to stay behind, or stay behind himself, or leave nobody behind? Why?

The continuation of the dilemma follows:

The captain finally decided to order one of the men to stay behind. One of the men he thought of had a lot of strength and courage but he was a bad troublemaker. He was always stealing things from the other men, beating them up, and refusing to do his work. The second man he thought of had gotten a bad disease in Korea and was likely to die in a short time anyway, though he was strong enough to do the job. If the captain was going to send one of the two men, should he send the troublemaker or the sick man? Why?

(Duska & Whelan, 1975, p. 122)



Appendix C  
Military Titles

DAPAM 27-1 Treaties Governing Land Warfare  
 FM 22-51 Leaders' Manual for Combat Stress Control  
 FM 22-100 Military Leadership  
 FM 22-102 Soldier Team Development  
 FM 25-100 Training the Force  
 FM 25-101 Training the Force: Battle-focused Training  
 FM 27-1 Legal Guide for Commanders  
 FM 27-10 The Law of Land Warfare  
 FM 100-1 The Army  
 FM 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations

MQS I (Training Support Package) Leadership  
 MQS I (Training Support Package) Leadership (Ethics)  
 MQS I (Training Support Package) Principles of War  
 MQS I (Training Support Package) Law of War  
 MQS I (Training Support Package) The Military Justice System  
 MQS I (Training Support Package) Military Law and Justice  
 MQS I (Training Support Package) Code of Conduct

Cadet Troop Leader Training: The Host Commander's Guide  
 Oklahoma ARNG recruiting packet  
 Readings for the Professional Leader of the Company  
 Career Development Orientation Packet: Oklahoma ARNG OCS

SH 7-161 Customs and Courtesies of the Service  
 SH 7-189-1 Leaders' Reaction Course  
 SH 22-227 OCS Leadership Workbook

TC 22-9-3 Military Professionalism (Battalion Instruction)  
 TC 27-10-1 Selected Problems in the Law of War  
 TC 27-10-2 Prisoners of War

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Appendix D  
RAMP-ROE Card Contents

(Front)

RAMP - Applied Meaning

R - Return Fire - means that if you have been fired on or otherwise attacked you may do what you must to protect yourself. This is the core of the right to self defense, which is never denied.

A - Anticipate Attack - means that self defense is not limited to returned fire. Soldiers do not have to receive the first shot before using force to protect themselves and other lives.

M - Measure Force - means that if you have a moment to choose your method, you must do so.

P - Protect Only Life with Deadly Force - or property designated by the commander, i.e., sensitive items, etc. Means shoot to kill.

(Back)

Measure Your Force

V - Verbal Warning - Tell person(s), in their language, to disperse, stay away, or halt.

E - Exhibit Weapon - Show your weapon or use some other display that you have superior force at your disposal.

W - Warning Shot - Shoot a warning shot, if authorized.

P - Pepper Spray - Spray cayenne pepper spray, if authorized.

R - Riot Stick - Strike with riot stick, if authorized and available and if the individual is close enough. Poke fleshy parts of the body first, arms and legs next, and, if necessary, escalate to striking the head.

I - Injure With Fire - Shoot to wound.

K - Kill - Shoot to kill.

(XVIII Airborne Corps, 1996)