

FLYING, LYING, AND LAYING LOW: HOW TO LEARN FROM NAVAL WAR COLLEGE LESSONS*

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I. INTRODUCTION

A study of the United States Naval War College was conducted.¹ This research questioned whether the Naval War College effectively taught a member of the U.S. Coast Guard, specifically Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Matthew E. Waranius, about the value of and method for not lying to oneself. The hypothesis was that the Naval War College educated a Coast Guard officer. Education was demonstrated in the impartation and application of values. The professional background of LCDR Waranius, the

* Ralph C. Cusack's contribution is acknowledged.

¹ An audio recording of this Article may be obtained at <https://soundcloud.com/matthew-waranius/flying-lying-and-laying-low>. Matthew E. Waranius, "Carmen M. Cusack and Matthew E. Waranius, *Flying, Lying, and Laying Low: How to Learn from Naval War College Lessons*, 20 J. L. & SOC. DEVIANCE 1 n. 1 (2020)," available at <https://soundcloud.com/matthew-waranius/flying-lying-and-laying-low>.

military officer, is discussed in Section II. Section III reviews literature distributed to LCDR Waranius prior to data analysis in this study. Section IV describes pre-intervention, which is enrollment. LCDR Waranius held expectations for the purpose of joining and demonstrated some knowledge about the Naval War College, possible classmates, and course design. The intervention, which was receiving the education, is described in Section V. A particular example about U.S. Army storyboards in a theater is influential. Section VI reviews LCDR Waranius' disenrollment; reasons for leaving the online program; and motives. Section VII presents findings and discussion of LCDR Waranius' history, knowledge, and professional promotion. Possible gains and changes to Naval War College strategies are recommended in Section VIII. The Conclusion is presented in Section IX. The hypothesis, not the null hypothesis, will be described as having been proven. Thus, the Naval War College taught an officer not to lie to himself.

II. BACKGROUND

This section describes the professional history of LCDR Waranius. The purpose of that background is to explain that the U.S. Coast Guard a) entered the War on Drugs and War on Terror through the Department of Homeland Security and other inlets; b) changed its structure during that process; and c) supplied members with the means to achieve professional goals in conjunction with participation in war. In the fall of 2001, Waranius enrolled in the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. On September 11, 2001, terror attacks provoked alterations to the American way of life, military, and treatment of war. As a direct result of the attacks, the Coast Guard was transferred from the Department of the Treasury to the newly created Department of Homeland Security on November 25, 2002 as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002.² The first Academy class of cadets that permitted any graduates to attend Naval Flight School directly from the Academy was the

² H.R. 5005, 107th Cong. (2001-2002). 6 U.S.C. § 113(a)(2)(c) (2002).

graduating class of 2004. Waranius graduated in 2005 and matriculated to flight school.³ Waranius is presently a Lieutenant Commander in the Coast Guard specializing in civil engineering.⁴

III. LITERATURE REVIEW: THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

The Naval War College, College of Distance Education supplied students with several materials about ethics and morals.⁵ One of the materials explained rights.⁶ It spoke about states' rights, federal duties, and the rights of soldiers.⁷ One theory is that the profession of the military ensures that all soldiers have an equal right to kill.⁸ Killing must be performed with strict regard for moral and ethical

³ Waranius attended the United States Air Force Academy as an exchange student while enrolled in the Coast Guard Academy.

⁴ LCDR Waranius earned an Ocean Engineering Master of Science from Florida Atlantic University and completed Duke University's Master of Engineering Management Online program. LCDR Waranius is a Professional Engineer (P.E.).

⁵ United States Naval War College, Syllabus & Study Guide (Version 1.1) (November 2019).

⁶ MICHAEL WALZER, *Rules of War, in JUST AND UNJUST WARS: A MORAL ARGUMENT WITH HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS*, 34-47 (3rd ed., 1977).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id. See*, U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 12.

standards.⁹ Soldiers, like knights and serfs, have equal rights to kill; yet, this premise is established by exiting the United States and entering into another land, or perhaps, invasion, etc.¹⁰ In the United States, constitutionalism is required, but was regarded as a difficult and tedious process that restricts the military.¹¹ Obedience is a compromise.¹² In actuality, military members' and units' services may be complimentary and without the state's approval.¹³ Military presence, within a state and areas including several states and regions comprised by individual states, is relevant to military duty.¹⁴ Yet, the democratic ideals protected by constitutionalism cannot interfere with decision-making, such as a decision to leave the United States.¹⁵ It is upon entering another nation that soldiers realize that those moral equals have a right to kill them.¹⁶ The premise

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.* U.S. Const. art. I, § 10, cl. 3.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Walzer, *Rules of War*, 34.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

is national security, not support of other nations, during times of war.¹⁷

Rights generate interest in membership.¹⁸ A pristine profession will attract brilliant professionals.¹⁹ “In sum, the highest standards of ethical climate and conduct are essential to maintaining a healthy military service and to attracting and retaining the best and most talented of each new generation of Americans.”²⁰ Ethical conduct and moral bolsters entice civilian and military support.²¹ While some civilians, such as legislators, family members, contractors, and police may be able to provide oversight and support efforts to maintain compliance, ethical standards must be held by members.²² Members cannot place the illusion of satisfaction above compliance.²³

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Infra* note.

¹⁹ Martin L. Cook, *Moral Foundations of Military Service*, 30 PARAMETERS 117 (2000).

²⁰ *Id.* at 129.

²¹ *Id.*

²² Leonard Wong & Stephen J. Gerras, *Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession*, U.S. Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute 1 (2015).

²³ *Id.*

When impossible workloads disrupt military performance, integrity likewise requires disclosure and revision.²⁴ The military must “introspectively examine how it might be inadvertently encouraging the very behavior it deems unacceptable. The unvarnished treatment of this sensitive topic...hopefully will be the start of a dialogue examining this crucial issue.”²⁵

Given that it is impossible to comply with every requirement, how do units and individuals reconcile the impossible task of accomplishing all directed training with a bureaucracy that demands confirmation that every requirement was accomplished? Do they admit noncompliance? Do they submit false reports? Before addressing these questions, it should be noted that U.S. Army officers, and members of the military profession in general, tend to have a self-image that bristles at any hint of dishonesty.²⁶

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.* at v quoting Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr. Director, Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press.

²⁶ *Id.* at 6.

At the Naval War College, LCDR Waranius read that a study of more than 20,000 Army members found that 93% believed that their personal values aligned with values held by the Army, such as “loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.”²⁷

Ethical fading would cause a military professional privately and professionally to adhere to those values, but fail to apply them in a particular circumstance.²⁸ Convincing oneself that a dilemma is unrelated to the contemplation of right and wrong causes ethical courage to dwindle during decision-making.²⁹ “Indeed, many officers even go as far as to insist that lying to the system” is “simply” like “prioritizing, accepting prudent risk, or” “good leadership.”³⁰ Stealing, cheating, and fibbing result when the servicemember perceives that the deception is remote and consequences are unlikely or distant.³¹ Minimization of repercussions correlates

²⁷ *Id.* at 7.

²⁸ Wong & Gerras (2015).

²⁹ *Id.* at 8.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

with psychological distance when the outcomes of choices are unknown.³²

Whether in the garrison or a combat environment, officers report that they shirk responsibilities due to greater pressures to perform.³³

The combat mission can lead to putting the right ‘spin’ on reports: ‘We got so focused on getting bodies to combat that we overlooked a lot of issues like weight control, alcohol, or...[Physical Training (PT)].’ Not surprisingly, directed training is also often sidestepped in theater.³⁴

An officer conveyed that he tried to complete mandatory Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SHARP) training:

We needed to get SHARP training done and reported to higher headquarters, so we called the platoons and told them to gather the boys around the radio and we said, ‘Don’t touch girls.’ That was our quarterly SHARP training.³⁵

³² *Id.*

³³ Wong & Gerras (2015).

³⁴ *Id.* at 13.

³⁵ *Id.* at 13.

Another officer stipulated that lies emerge when nearly impossible conditions are enforced.³⁶ The officer had altered the truth so that soldiers could receive water heaters and take hot showers after patrolling.³⁷ They could not receive water heaters until they extended the truth.³⁸ The water heaters had to be justified for other purposes.³⁹ The act was unethical, but the imposition of alternative realities was nearly unendurable.⁴⁰

Controls that suppress misappropriation should advance ethical environments.⁴¹ Focus on internal controls indoctrinating and subordinating a professional is as important as external controls that monitor and punish.⁴² Another option is utilizing internal and external controls to calculate the effect of persuasion in a given circumstance.⁴³ Persuasion

³⁶ *Id.* at 22.

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ Wong & Gerras (2015).

⁴¹ Jessica Blankshain, *A Primer on U.S. Civil-Military Relations*, adapted from Mackubin Owens, *What Military Officers Need to Know about Civil-Military Relations*, Naval War College faculty paper (May 2015).

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ *Id.* at 4.

should augment morality and reduce unethical compromises.⁴⁴ Persuasion became a hot-button issue in 2006 when the “Revolt of the Generals” publicized views of retired Army and U.S. Marine Corps generals that antagonized, criticized, and helped the executive branch of the government.⁴⁵ Retired military (i.e., civilian) endorsements may have significant or insignificant effects on the military’s ability to be honest with itself in the workplace and in consideration of the profession.⁴⁶

IV. PRE-INTERVENTION

Pre-intervention occurs prior to the introduction of a variable. It signifies how much knowledge a research subject has going into the intervention. The enrollment of Coast Guard LCDR Waranius occurred pre-intervention through the Naval War College, which remained constant. LCDR Waranius

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *Id. See, Carmen M. Cusack, Blind Rhyme: The Reasonable Person Standard Violates the First Amendment*, 19 J. L. & SOC. DEVIANCE 3 (2020).

enrolled in Naval Command & Staff Online Program. The program is exclusively available to members of the military and select civilian officials in the government. Admission is a meticulous process requiring command support and qualifying credentials. LCDR Waranius conveyed to Dr. Carmen Cusack, Esq. that he held an expectation that leadership would be discussed and the Naval War College's expertise in leadership would be imparted. He intended to use the reputation of the Naval War College to build professional approval and networks. He believed that he may complete five modules. He completed the Foundational Knowledge Course, a pre-requisite to the Naval Command and Staff course, and one week of the first module.

V. INTERVENTION: EDUCATION

The intervention occurred when LCDR Waranius received educational materials.⁴⁷ The materials professed to discuss the ethical standards to which

⁴⁷ Wong & Gerras (2015).

society holds military officers, such as the importance of disclosing the truth to oneself.⁴⁸ LCDR Waranius read a description of an officer's experience.⁴⁹ The officer compiled storyboards.⁵⁰ A storyboard should carefully describe and document (e.g., using data and photos) the process of an attack.⁵¹ The battles documented by the officer were never recognized.⁵² They were printed and shuffled.⁵³ Yet, the veracity and accuracy were not registered.⁵⁴ The officer felt disconnected from the process of following rules requiring storyboards.⁵⁵

Dismissing any potential damage that may result from a misleading or incomplete storyboard allows leaders to view the requirement as yet another petty bureaucratic obligation void of any ethical considerations.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ Wong & Gerras (2015).

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ Wong & Gerras (2015) at 20.

LCDR Waranius understood details not presented in the literature.⁵⁷ For example, one possible way to misrepresent the truth would be to reuse photographs from another attack. The course materials provided a method for being honest with oneself.⁵⁸ The method was the following a) “Acknowledge the Problem;”⁵⁹ b) “Exercise Restraint;”⁶⁰ and c) “Lead Truthfully.”⁶¹

VI. POST-INTERVENTION

After completing some studies on professionalism, LCDR Waranius disenrolled. He reasoned that he should not lie to himself. He was not passionate about the material and could use his time to pursue other professional activities and interests that were more satisfying and beneficial to his career. His exit demonstrated that learning was intended to have occurred. He satisfied core purposes of the

⁵⁷ Wong & Gerras (2015).

⁵⁸ Wong & Gerras (2015).

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 29.

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 30.

⁶¹ *Id.* at 32.

program by demonstrating competence. The program's core competencies included, a) "Comprehend the ethical and moral responsibilities associated with being a member of the profession of arms" and b) "Comprehend the potential leadership challenges and decision-making pitfalls within joint organizations and how mid-level leaders can effectively address such challenges."⁶²

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The cause of disenrollment was education and self-analysis. Understanding the restrictions of time and complying with every requirement were outweighed by the seriousness of his job commitment. To have stayed in the program would have meant that he was passionate about it. He has demonstrated passion and enthusiasm for the Coast Guard and willingness to learn Naval tactics and

⁶² U.S. Naval War College, Naval Command & Staff Online Program, College of Distance Education, Syllabus & Study Guide (Version 1.1), app. B NC&S Program Core Competencies, 2 and 4 (B-1) (Nov. 2019).

techniques to meet the Coast Guard's goals, such as beginning Naval Flight School as an Ensign, completing the program, and flying with the Coast Guard. The program taught him to analyze whether the upcoming modules, focused on war, were going to be of value to his position.

LCDR Waranius enrolled to gain prestige. Prestige is gained by learning, applying the information, being truthful with oneself, and managing one's time. Being a good leader requires an officer to accept given constraints, abide by the requirements, disclose debilities, and optimize. LCDR Waranius acknowledged the problem by evaluating the material and his circumstances. He exercised restraint by ending his time commitment and only learning lessons that directly benefited his employment goals. He led truthfully by presenting a candid explanation to the Naval War College and fulfilling his pledge to continue gaining employment activities that impassioned him.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A goal of Joint Professional Military Education offered by the Naval War College is to create well-rounded officers who are familiar with all aspects of the Navy and other branches. The Coast Guard is different. Since it is so small, most officers working with other communities (e.g., U.S. Air Force) may get much more experience than officers in the Navy, who stay in one specialized community for most of their careers. Unlike many Coast Guard officers, Navy officers may not be introduced and accustomed to the array of linkages. The Naval War College should rely on this study and recommendations to help enrolled professionals achieve goals. The Naval War College addresses the Coast Guard later in the program, Block Four. It may include this study to enrich discussions. This is relevant to attitudes and learning accomplishments, such as those exhibited by LCDR Waranius; theater-level security arenas affecting the Coast Guard; and civilians overseeing or implementing rules affecting the Coast Guard (e.g., War on Terror and War on Drugs). Academic

perspectives presented in this study may demonstrate professional passion and should be included in the Naval War College's path to connect paid warriors to civilians and other servicemembers. Perhaps civilians, who do not meet the current enrollment criteria, but who have the desire and motivation, could be valuable contributors to the program and specific classroom discussions by bringing in more varied experiences. The Naval War College may improve by pre-screening for desire and motivation to be in the program. It may include a discussion of what the program is and is not to verify that everyone's expectations are aligned prior to starting the program. LCDR Waranius' self-reflective decision-making may be like interagency executive-level decision-making because the educational principles were embraced by LCDR Waranius demonstrating the efficaciousness of the educational channel. Therefore, the Naval War College should recognize that fellowship and instruction were received by LCDR Waranius, who is an officer in the

Coast Guard and graduate of Naval Flight School and the Coast Guard Academy.

IX. CONCLUSION

This research investigated whether the Naval War College educated and fulfilled a member of the Coast Guard. The Naval War College, concerned with integrity and chivalry, presented lessons about how not to lie. Lying to oneself results in deception spreading through the military. It not only violates protocols, it harms individuals, missions, jurisdictions, and a purpose of abiding by the U.S. Constitution. The result of having learned, early-on, not to lie to oneself is that LCDR Waranius can impart a) the knowledge through this work; b) the values through his dissemination of moral decision-making; and c) attempt to fulfill increasing expectations for the Coast Guard to operate as the military, a security agency, and a body of leadership among civilians who provide and require direct

oversight for personal, public, and professional affairs.⁶³

⁶³ Carmen M. Cusack, FISH, JUSTICE, & SOCIETY (2018).