# Chapter 5
# Ethics by the Book for Now and Always:
## Educating Future Air Force Officers on Issues of Ethics and Law

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## ABSTRACT

*Cadets' character and ethical quality are crucial; they determine the kind of officers who will join the Air Force after they graduate. The texts relating to the ethical traditions aim at building the cadets' character and lay out all the values and principles that a future officer should uphold. In this context, this chapter seeks to investigate the extent to which ethical parameters are present in the Air Force Cadet Wing Honor Code. The authors then want to relate the ethical education provided to the cadets by the academy with their mission after graduation. To accomplish their duties, pilots seem to be influenced by their beliefs, their studies, and of course, the honor code; issues of ethics and the law also influence to a high degree the psychology of pilots and determine to a high extent their reactions and effectiveness. The final goal is to investigate to what extent ethics and the law influence pilots' decisions and are interpreted by fighter aircrafts' pilots of the Hellenic Air Force and attack helicopter pilots of the Hellenic Army.*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the context for training Hellenic Air Force Academy (HAFA) cadets in both the theory and application of ethical leadership, especially in times of armed conflict, but also throughout their careers. An analysis of the texts of both the HAFA Honor Code and the Greek Military Legal Statute provide a necessary basis for understanding the ethical leadership theory cadets at HAFA study. But such text-based theoretical study is wholly inadequate if not coupled with thoughtful, realistic, meaningful opportunities for cadets to practice ethical leadership in authentic ways --- ways that force cadets to struggle with spur-of-the-moment ethical decisions with significant ramifications --- often life

and death. HAFA revised its curriculum beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year, to add games and simulations to military ethics courses, with the primary goal of extending the curriculum well beyond theoretical ethics to the practical application of ethical principles in command roles on the battlefield. The present study examined the context and impact of that curricular change, and attitudes of HAFA graduates regarding the shift to using games and simulations in military ethics courses.

## REVIEW OF THE HONOR CODE

One characteristic of all military schools and colleges is the use of an Honor Code. The Hellenic Air Force Academy is no exception. The HAFA Honor Code is made up of two discreet elements: a theoretical framework rooted in the notion of honorable living, coupled with the manner in which that the honor system is applied and manifests itself as a "lived reality" (Hellenic Air Force Academy, 2019: 1-11, 33-36, 93-128, 141-145).

The first part of HAFA's Honor Code addresses the way of living and the ethos that should be characteristic of the cadets. It is made clear from the beginning that the desired characteristics included in the code constitute the minimum standard of acceptable behaviour. The honor code includes the basic characteristics of the group that reinforce the bonds between its members, makes them distinct from other group members and aids in the development of trust for the effective operation of the group. These characteristics are non-negotiable: whoever wishes to be part of the group must accept them, especially since his or her participation is voluntary and not compulsory.

This code, paired with the educational process in use at the Academy, aims at achieving certain targets, more specifically character development, the transfer of the status of a civilian to the status of an officer, the observance of principles and rules (related to the development of cadets' character and responsibility (Bivins, 2006: 29) / accountability (Tetlock, 1985, Frink & Klimoski, 1998) / liability (Duff, R., 2007, Frey & Morris, 1991), the development of healthy habits and, of course, the ability to recognize and follow the right thing to do every time.

The major violations of the code are about the following acts:

- lying;
- stealing;
- deceiving;
- tolerance to those who do not observe the code.

If we look at the above violations on an individual basis, we see that they are about both facets of the Academy: the educational training, as well as the military one. It goes without saying that for a violation to exist there should be both an act and the intention to act in that way from the offender's part. The fear of failure, the continuous effort to achieve the best, the rationalisation of offensive behaviour, the lack of time to perform the appropriate actions, the intense competition --- none of these can serve as excuses for violating the rules of the code. Also, sympathy for a colleague or the fear of counteraction are not sufficient excuses for demonstrating tolerance in the case that somebody else is not following the rules of the code.

Lying is not allowed in any form, either verbally or in writing. Even in the case that there is a misunderstanding in what has been said or written, it should be corrected on time to avoid any misconceptions.

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