

“Black Hearts” Case Study: The Yusufiyah Crimes, Iraq, March 12, 2006



Figure 1: Iraq and the Triangle of Death
Open Source Map

Instructions for the Government of Armies of
the United States in the Field, April 24, 1863.
General Orders, No. 100

“Men who take up arms against one another in
public war do not cease on this account to be
moral beings, responsible to one another, and to
God.”

Section 1-15

“Military necessity does not admit of cruelty, that
is, the infliction of suffering for the sake of
suffering or for revenge, nor of maiming . . .”

Section 1-16

“All wanton violence committed against persons
in the invaded country . . . are prohibited . . .
neither officers nor soldiers (sic) are allowed to
make use of their position or power in the hostile
country for private gain . . . offences to the
contrary . . . shall be punished according to the
nature of the offence.”

Section 2-44 to 2-47

Background - The Crimes of Rape and Murder

On March 12, 2006, five Soldiers from 1st Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division abandoned their posts and headed to the village of Yusufiyah, located within their operational sector in Iraq. There the five Soldiers committed a brutal gang-rape and murder of a 14-year-old Iraqi girl, Abeer Qassim Hamza al-Janabi, and the simultaneous murder of her family.¹ Those who were murdered included: Abeer’s 34-year-old mother, Fakhriyah Taha Muhasen; her 45-year-old father, Qassim Hamza Raheem; and her six-year-old sister, Hadeel Qassim Hamza Al-Janabi. She had two brothers, 11-year-old Mohammed and 9-year-old Ahmed, who were not at home when the rape and murders occurred.

The family’s house where this atrocity occurred was situated approximately 200 meters (220 yards) from a six-man U.S. traffic checkpoint (TCP), southwest of the village of Yusufiyah, which lies west of the larger township of Al-Mahmudiyah in a region of Iraq

**The quote box above is taken from what is commonly known as the Lieber Code of 1863. These articles were developed as a means to provide guidance and governing rules for the conduct of Soldiers during the Civil War. Though over 150 years old, these guidelines provide significant ethical and moral insight on how military members should conduct themselves on fields of battle, even those as chaotic and amorphous as Iraq. The entire code is reproduced in John Fabian Witt, *Lincoln’s Code: The Laws of War in American History*, New York: Free Press, 2012, Appendix, pp. 375-394.

¹ Jim Frederick, *Black Hearts: One Platoon’s Descent into Madness in Iraq’s Triangle of Death*. New York: Broadway, 2010. Chapter 20 provides a detailed description of this event.

commonly referred to as the Triangle of Death by coalition forces.² On the morning of the crimes, SGT Paul Cortez, SPC James Barker, PFC Jesse Spielman, PFC Steven Green, and PFC Brian Howard, who served as the group's lookout, gathered together and began to both discuss and plan the attack on the al-Janabi family, and in particular on Abeer. The Soldiers made detailed plans on how they were going to enter the al-Janabi house, sequester and kill all but Abeer, whom they would separate from the family and rape her, each taking their turn.³

Fueled by alcohol confiscated from Iraqis, coupled with talk of revenge against the Iraqi people, the Soldiers directed their frustrations towards the family whom they rationalized were supporting their enemies, viewing them as scapegoats for the real and imagined suffering they were experiencing. The Soldiers outlined their mission making "duty assignments."⁴ Armed and disguised in order to appear inconspicuous, while fully aware of what they were about to do, these Soldiers abandoned their assigned TCP and headed to the al-Janabi home.

After cutting through a surrounding chain link fence, the Soldiers entered the home. Green and Spielman grabbed Hadeel, the youngest daughter, and family patriarch Qassim quickly moving them inside the home. Barker and Cortez cleared the house and detained Abeer and her mother Fakhriah. After completing a final sweep, they segregated Abeer from the rest of her family in another area of the house. At the time of this forced separation, Cortez and Barker began raping Abeer.

Green tried forcing the rest of the family onto the floor. When they didn't follow his order, Green murdered the rest of the family. Spielman, who was temporarily separated from the other Soldiers, heard the sounds of gunfire and ran to the room to ensure that his fellow Soldiers were safe. Spielman arrived at the scene and, upon seeing the murdered family, became angry at what Green had done.

Each Soldier took turns raping Abeer. Then they shot her in the head and tried to conceal their crimes by setting her body and the home on fire. With the house engulfed in flames, they returned to the TCP.⁵ The Soldiers developed a story to cover up their complicity in the crimes by attributing fault to insurgents operating in the local area.

The purpose of this case study is not to debate the ethicality of the Soldiers' actions. The Soldiers clearly committed crimes that violated the laws of war. Their conduct was far outside the ethical norms of trusted Army professionals as described in the Army Ethic. Instead, the intent of the case study is to examine several factors that may have contributed to the crimes in order to better understand how to prevent such an atrocity in the future. Additionally, the case study provides an opportunity to examine how to act on a decision that one knows is right even when presented with conflicting interests, adversity, and physical danger.

² See enclosed map, and online at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangle_of_Death_\(Iraq\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangle_of_Death_(Iraq)) for a more detailed description of this area and how this area shaped conditions for the al-Janabi rape and murders. See also Frederick, *Black Hearts*, Chapter 3, pp. 43-50. Here Frederick provides a historical synopsis of this area.

³ Ibid, pp. 258-261.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 258-268. These pages recount the event and the moral callousness of the perpetrators towards the family in general, and Abeer in particular.

Factors Contributing to the Crimes

The operations tempo in Iraq was high for many units like Bravo Company with similar missions, personnel, and materiel constraints. But nearly all of those units and the Soldiers in them served with great honor and courage, abiding by the laws of war and the Army Ethic despite great adversity and physical danger. So what was different for the 1st Platoon in Bravo Company?

The Battalion's mission was to deny access to enemy insurgents and train their counterparts in the Iraqi Army.⁶ The Battalion was assigned to a particularly violent and deadly sector southwest of Baghdad, a place where "daily doses of carnage" would be considered normal.⁷ The Battalion, a force of about 700 Soldiers, encountered roughly 900 improvised explosive devices (IED), daily doses of shelling by mortars and rocket propelled grenades (RPG), as well as continuous harassment by rifle and small arms fire. Prolonged exposure to combat operations led to high death and injury rates to include officer and NCO leadership. In the first 90 days of operations, Bravo Company lost three platoon leaders, a first sergeant, a squad leader, and a team leader to death or injury. As recorded in *Blackhearts*, by their deployment's end 51 of approximately 135 Soldiers were KIA, WIA or transferred out.⁸

The harsh combat operations were exacerbated by multiple internal and external factors which negatively impacted the unit climate and in turn contributed to moral desensitization among the Soldiers. Factors that could have contributed to this moral desensitization and the resulting crimes included:

- high casualty rates
- significant leadership complications and discord
- mismatch in troop to task ratios causing greater dispersion and less supervision
- materiel constraints
- deficiencies in training and deployment preparations
- breakdowns in communication
- degraded living conditions - especially after a fire in the Platoon area led to the significant loss of the Soldiers' possessions, equipment, and personal items

Bravo Company spent what was effectively 11 months straight outside the wire on combat missions, with the requirement for 24-hour a day vigilance for those manning the TCPs. This exacerbated the already fraying connection to the Battalion Headquarters due to physical, logistical, and psychological separation from the command. There were multiple symptoms and indicators that something was amiss with the Platoon, beyond the normal wear and tear of combat, but the indicators are often easier to see in hindsight. Symptoms and indicators included:

- degraded Soldier discipline
- loss of trust and disruptive relationships

⁶ Frederick, *Black Hearts*, pp. 24-25, 28. See also pp. 37-38.

⁷ *Ibid*, book forward, pp. xvi-xvii. Frederick describes how the violence was an unrelenting assault upon body, mind, and soul for Soldier and civilian alike.

⁸ *Ibid*, xvii, in the Foreword to the book.

- degraded unit cohesion and esprit-de-corps
- a tribal mentality⁹
- decreased sense of purpose and meaning
- increased pessimism and cynicism
- growth in feelings of dehumanization of self and of the local populace¹⁰

Bravo Company's continued exposure to combat and other stressors overwhelmed some Soldier's psychological capabilities to endure and remain resilient.¹¹ The continued exposure to combat operations, with limited support, increased casualties within the company and platoon. The resulting downward spiral was compounded by "fatigue, anxiety and panic attacks, increasing irritability, and obsessive compulsive tendencies" as well as substance abuse using illegally obtained alcohol and drugs.¹²

The violence and killing, inflamed by ongoing local sectarian and ethnic strife, aggravated the psychological challenges experienced by members of Bravo Company.¹³ Magnifying the regressive organizational and operational climate were conflicting orders which further degraded the moral compass of the Soldiers.¹⁴ Furthermore, repeated mission changes and continuing loss of confidence and trust in the chain of command reduced the psychological and moral resiliency of the platoon and augmented their decline towards violent tendencies. The violence was manifested in hatred of the Iraqi people, with the al-Janabi family, and Abeer in particular, serving as the scapegoats for the rage and anger of the Soldiers.

Exposing the Moral Misconduct

Upon discovery of the destroyed al-Janabi home and criminal evidence, local Iraqi's contacted U.S. Soldiers to request assistance with investigating the crimes. Since the incident took place in 1st Platoon's sector, they were tasked by Battalion leaders to investigate. SGT Tony Yribe, a squad leader in 1st Platoon began the investigation and eventually hid the complicity of U.S. Soldiers in the crimes. PFC Justin Watt, also in 1st Platoon, became aware of the crimes and reported them. Both Soldiers discovered that their fellow Soldiers had committed the crimes, but SGT Yribe and PFC Watt took much different actions to handle what they knew was morally wrong.

SGT Tony Yribe investigated the crime scene with several Soldiers from 1st Platoon. When he dropped off Spielman and Cortez at TCP 2, SGT Yribe was met by Green who feigned curiosity concerning all the commotion. Green asked SGT Yribe what was going on and, without any instigation by Yribe, he admitted to perpetrating the crime.¹⁵ Taken off guard by Green's initial statement, Yribe at first dismissed what he

⁹ Ibid, pp. 97, 108, 130, 144-145.

¹⁰ Ibid, 148, 151-152, 156-157, 169.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 172-173. See also Dave Grossman, *On Killing*, from which Frederick quotes the increasing costs that the platoon was paying for a multidimensional experience in war.

¹² Ibid, p. 173. Reading Frederick, and news reports over the incident show that there were multiple catalysts which led to this crime and there is not necessarily any one person, event, or organizational dynamic that can be pointed to as the lead cause of the al-Janabi rape and murders.

¹³ Frederick, p. 233.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 234.

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 268-269.

heard, attributing it to Green's odd personality. Yribe reasoned to himself that Green was incapable of perpetrating the acts of violence he was investigating.

As the investigation continued, the cover story began unraveling as Cortez, acting with SGT Yribe as one of the investigators of the crime in which he himself had participated, began to experience vivid flashbacks of the event as he encountered the scene at the house post incident. Cortez was so shaken by what he saw—the dead girl reminding him of his own niece—that he asked to be sent to combat stress.¹⁶

Yribe soon began piecing together varied fragments of information he gained from hearsay, direct evidence (finding a shotgun shell at the scene – shotguns were rare in Iraq and normally used only by Americans), and personal encounters with participants in the crime. This enabled him to develop a basic understanding of what occurred and who was involved. Yribe took Green aside and further questioned him. Green, with Barker nearby remaining silent, described the crimes in great detail but claimed he had committed them by himself. Yribe stood up and told Green, "I am done with you. You are dead to me. You get yourself out of this Army, or I will get you out myself."¹⁷ Now, Yribe finally, and fully, absorbed the implications of what he knew about the actions of Green and the others and the impact the crime would have on the unit. In spite of this knowledge, and his personal awareness of the moral failure of the Soldiers involved, Yribe willfully neglected to report what he knew about the incident, either out of misplaced loyalty or a desire to spare his Soldiers and unit from disgrace.

PFC Justin Watt was fairly new to the platoon and was not at TCP 2 during the crime. When he began to hear rumors concerning the al-Janabi rape and murders, he talked about it with PFC Bryan Howard, who was present at the incident, though he did not directly participate inside the house. Though Howard had only second-hand recollections of the event, what he relayed to Watt confirmed Watt's intuition about the incident and who was responsible. Watt followed proper command channels and reported what he knew to his supervisor, SGT Yribe. Unfortunately, SGT Yribe stonewalled Watt and continued to conceal the information from the chain of command.¹⁸

Though Watt did not have firsthand knowledge of the events, he was fully convinced that members of his unit perpetrated these acts. The emotional strain he experienced as he placed himself inside the event, and into the place of the father, led him to contact his own father to seek advice as to what he should do.¹⁹ The advice he received from his father confirmed what he knew to be right.²⁰ Watt personally and professionally struggled with what he should do, but he never rationalized what had occurred. Instead, exhibiting moral clarity, he understood that what happened was inexcusable and had to be reported despite the adversity he would experience to include death threats from his fellow Soldiers.²¹

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 269.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 270.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 310-313.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 314.

²¹ Ibid.

Not satisfied with remaining silent, nor with the response of his immediate chain of command, Watt ultimately turned to another NCO within the Company, SGT John Diem. Diem had a reputation as a professional Soldier and trustworthy leader.²² Initially, Watt hesitated at fully detailing the crimes to Diem. Soon he opened up, sharing what he knew with Diem. Diem immediately acted and reported the crimes to his chain of command.²³ Diem's report started a cascade of action that directly led to reporting the details of American culpability in the event to the upper echelons of leadership which led to a full blown investigation into the incident.

Death threats followed Watt as he continued to perform his duties, and he soon found himself in a compromising situation. Not long after reporting the incident, he was taken out on a patrol by unit leaders, and ultimately left on a checkpoint with some members of his unit upset with his actions. As the convoy departed, Watt experienced discomfort and concern at being left on the checkpoint, and as it moved 100 feet, then 200 feet, then 300 feet and more, he wondered whether his leaders would realize what they had done, and return for him. As his immediate chain of command continued to move out, only one leader turned back to remove him from the potentially disastrous situation - SGT John Diem. Diem, serving as a team leader in another platoon wheeled about and returned to remove Watt, reinforcing his reputation as a trustworthy leader, and one who lived the NCO creed.²⁴

Postscript – Investigation and Prosecution

The actions of both PFC Watt and SGT Diem led to a full investigation into the events surrounding the al-Janabi rape and murders. Watt and Diem demonstrated moral courage to live up to and act on the moral principles and values of the Army Ethic despite competing interests, risk, and adversity.

SGT John Diem

Continued to serve with 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment at Fort Campbell deploying with the unit in 2007-2008. He was promoted to Staff Sergeant and continued to serve at Fort Campbell with the 101st Airborne Division. His demonstrated character and integrity led to PFC Watt trusting and confiding in him. For first-hand accounts of his decisions, actions, and ethical reasoning, watch video interviews of SSG Diem at:

<http://cape.army.mil/case-studies/vcs-single.php?id=86&title=stand-strong-stewardship-an-ncos-perspective>

and

<http://cape.army.mil/case-studies/vcs-single.php?id=88&title=stand-strong-the-effects-of-combat-on-the-army-professional-a-leaders-perspective>

²² *ibid*, pp. 318, 326-327.

²³ *ibid*, pp.318-319.

²⁴ Watt, Justin, 2014. Interview by the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, Oct 6. Accessed on December 8, 2018 at:

<http://cape.army.mil/case-studies/vcs-single.php?id=87&title=stand-strong-the-effects-of-combat-on-the-army-professional>.

PFC Justin Watt

PFC Watt was diagnosed with combat related injuries which resulted in a medical retirement as a SPC in December of 2007. He is a partner in a computer based business. By 2010, he started speaking at major venues on his experiences and his decision to report the crime in accordance with his moral obligations as a professional Soldier. For first-hand accounts of his decisions, actions, and ethical reasoning, watch video interviews of Justin Watt at:

<http://cape.army.mil/case-studies/vcs-single.php?id=85&title=stand-strong-serving-honorably-in-combat>

and

<http://cape.army.mil/case-studies/vcs-single.php?id=87&title=stand-strong-the-effects-of-combat-on-the-army-professional>

Key Results

Ultimately, the resulting investigation led to the successful prosecution of the key members of 1st Platoon, Bravo Company who were responsible for the crimes of rape, murder, and obstruction of justice.

Those prosecuted for their participation in the crimes included:

Sergeant Anthony Yribe

The results of the investigation led to Yribe initially being charged with obstructing the investigation, in particular, dereliction of duty and making false statements. He received an "other than honorable discharge," and the charges against him were dropped in exchange for testimony against the other Soldiers.

Sergeant Paul E. Cortez

SGT Cortez pleaded guilty to rape and murder in a court martial on January 22, 2007. He was sentenced to 100 years imprisonment and is currently in confinement at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Specialist James P. Barker

SPC Barker pleaded guilty to rape and murder as part of a plea agreement to avoid the death penalty. He was sentenced to a 90-year prison term and is currently in confinement at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Private First Class Jesse V. Spielman

On August 3, 2007, PFC Spielman was sentenced by a court martial to 10 years in prison for rape, conspiracy to rape, housebreaking with the intent to rape, and four counts of felony murder. He is currently in confinement at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Private First Class Steven D. Green

PFC Green was discharged from the U.S. Army for mental instability before the crimes were known by his chain of command. Green was ultimately tried in a United States civilian court, convicted of rape and the four murders, and sentenced to life in prison. Green committed suicide in 2014 while serving his life sentence in Arizona.

Private First Class Bryan I. Howard

PFC Howard was sentenced by a court martial under a plea agreement to a dishonorable discharge and received a 27-month prison sentence in March of 2007 for obstruction of justice and accessory after the fact. He received an early parole after 17 months resulting from good behavior and time served in pre-trial confinement.

Discussion Questions:

- How did environmental, operational, and organizational factors shape the climate of 1st Platoon?
- Which of these factors can be prevented by organizational leaders? Explain how.
- Which of these factors can only be mitigated by organizational leaders? Explain how.
- Research indicates that developing the character of individuals is necessary but insufficient. Even the most moral individuals tend to adopt the norms of their group, their organizational climate. How did the organizational climate of 1st Platoon contribute to or enable these atrocities?
- SGT Yribe and PFC Watt both appeared to understand that the actions of their fellow Soldiers from 1st Platoon were morally wrong, a violation of the laws of war. Compare and contrast their actions. What caused them to take different actions when they both knew the conduct was wrong?
- What influenced SGT Yribe to cover up this crime? How do you interpret his actions in light of Army Values and the moral principles of the Army Ethic?
- What influenced PFC Watt to report this crime? How do you interpret his actions in light of Army Values and the moral principles of the Army Ethic?
- As an organizational leader, how can you develop the character of Soldiers to act with moral courage despite competing interests, risk, and adversity?
- What are your professional and moral responsibilities to report misconduct? Does it depend upon the severity of the misconduct? Does it depend upon who committed the misconduct? What other methods of handling the misconduct are acceptable instead of reporting it to your chain of command?
- What attributes caused PFC Watt to trust SGT Diem? How did SGT Diem reinforce that trust in his decision to go back for Watt when he was left at a checkpoint with Soldiers who meant to harm him?
- We often know the difference between right and wrong. However, many times we don't act on what we know to be right due to self-interest, peer pressure, or uncertainty about how our superiors will accept bad news. How can we prepare in advance to act on our values?
- How does moral desensitization affect the ethical reasoning of Soldiers? How do you guard against moral desensitization in combat?
- The challenges of combat often result in very strong unit cohesion. When does cohesion become counterproductive? How do you resolve tensions between loyalty to your fellow Soldier or unit when they are not upholding the Army Ethic and loyalty to the Army as a profession?

General Research and Reference Materials:

Books:

Paul Christopher (LTC-R). Book Review: *Black Hearts: One Platoon's Descent into Madness in Iraq's Triangle of Death* by Jim Frederick.

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John Fabian Witt. *Lincoln's Code: The Laws of War in American History*. New York: Free Press, 2012.

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Thomas Nagel. "War and Massacre." *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Winter, 1972), pp. 123-144. Article downloaded from 70.175.9.72 on Thu, 16 Aug 2018 14:08:57 UTC.

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Dan Sukman, guest columnist. "Blackhearts (I): A View from the Inside." *Foreign Policy Magazine* online. Best Defense Opinion Page, and blog. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/21/blackhearts-i-a-view-from-the-inside-2/> (accessed March 26, 2018).

Jim Frederick on the Hamza Rape and Murder in Mahmudiyah:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmudiyah_rape_and_killings

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/03/inside-blackhearts-ii-our-lousy-command-relations-frayed-badly-in-iraq/>

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/gail-mcgowan-mellor/black-hearts-anatomy-of-a_b_520740.html

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEI0uX8sZlo> video of author Jim Frederick

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8Ov6nlcUHW> Black Hearts Author speaking at Concordia College, NY

<https://gulffnews.com/culture/books/a-story-about-man-at-war-1.663393> discusses how the platoon responsible for Mahmudiyah struggled in Iraq

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBWL1CFDb-A> Jim Frederick Stutt Lecture at USNA 2014

PFC Justin Watt Reporting of the Crime:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/07/world/middleeast/07cnd-iraq.html>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/07/AR2006080700780.html?noredirect=on>

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General Reporting on Black Hearts and Mahmudiyah:

Iraq War – The Rape and Murder of Abeer Qassim Hamza
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8VBR608YjM>

Additional Video Case Studies on Black Hearts Incident March 2006

If you would like any video case studies listed below that are not hyperlinked to the CAPE website, please [contact us](#).

LFY01 - Triangle of Death, Pt. 1- Heavy Losses:

The author of Black Hearts, Jim Frederick, provides a brief description of the area of operations for 1/502d, and of Bravo Company in particular within the faultlines of Sunni-Shia violence in the Triangle of Death. Without making excuses for the tragedy to come, he provides details of the trauma, loss, and psychological stress and strain that Bravo faced. Near-continuous mortar, small arms fire, and IED attacks leading to the deaths of key leaders impacted the resiliency of the company, which in turn contributed to the moral misconduct to follow.

LFY01 - Triangle of Death, Pt. 2- Soldiers' Reactions:

Soldiers in B Company provide a snapshot into the struggles they had with understanding the type of war they were engaged in, and the mixture of kinetic and non-kinetic warfare that led to incidents that fractured trust between the Soldiers and the local populace, who continuously tested the Soldiers' resolve.

LFY02 - First Casualties, Watt:

Recounts first incident of direct action in which casualties were taken at a TCP. Watt describes his observations and responses to the injured to include how he attempted first aid, but the casualties were KIA. Vignette details the reality of death in combat and its impact on the Soldier who felt helpless to prevent it.

LFY03 - How I Found Out, Watt:

Watt discusses the initial details of how Green confessed to the crime at the al-Janabi home, yet he believed that from a logistical/tactical standpoint Green could not have done what he confessed to alone. As a result, Watt does some checking to confirm his suspicions, and discovers how events led to the placement of Soldiers at check points in a manner that put the "morally bankrupt ones" at the same place.

LFY04 - Why I Did It, Pt. 1- Watt:

The first of three videos, Watt discusses how he approached what he needed to do from two perspectives. Firstly, from the perspective of the al-Janabi Family, and the father in particular, who were helpless in this chaotic situation to do anything to stop what was occurring. Secondly, from the perspective of how could he know and not act; especially how would he explain to others that he knew and did nothing to report this action by his fellow Soldiers? How would he live with himself if he did not act?

LFY04 - Why I Did It, Pt. 2- Watt:

The second of three parts, Watt recounts how he sought counsel from his father concerning his determination to report the crime. He relates his struggle with his personal and moral identity as he discusses that he sought affirmation and reassurance from his father, a veteran himself, that his reporting of the crime was right.

LFY04 - Why I Did It, Pt. 3- Watt:

The third of three videos, Watt continues to explain why he reported the incident. His reflection centers on his desire for acting justly in light of what he knew, to bring justice to the family, and not have to carry the ghosts of the deployment back with him.

LFY05 - Personal Costs, Watt:

Watt relates his struggle with the decision to report, whether he did the right thing, as he acknowledges that reporting the crime placed him in difficult positions with those whom he thought were his friends. Watt relays the psychological, emotional, professional, and personal costs for doing the right thing. Watt examines these costs in light of the incident and relays to the interviewer that these losses were worthy costs for doing the right thing.

LFY06 - Identity, Watt:

Watt discusses his desire to join the Army not only to prove to himself who he is and what he could do, but also to do something important with his life. For Watt, Army service was a noble calling, while also providing him with aspirations to overcome his limits, increase his physical and psychological capabilities by meeting the demands of Army life, and strengthen his identity through growth, maturation, and personal and professional formation. For him the move to a hardy resilience and emerging identity drove him towards excellence as a Soldier.

LFY07- Moral Courage, Lee:

Lee rightly acknowledges that the Army possesses both moral failure and moral heroism. As he reflects on Watt's actions, he places him in the category of the moral hero. Lee sees this as stemming from the fact that Watt made the choice to report the incident as all the Army stood for was being shredded by the morally criminal acts which took place, and Watt's ability to withstand the pressure and stress that comes when taking a morally courageous stand in a combat situation. Lee firmly believes that moral heroism, birthed in moral courage is not just placing oneself in front of a friend to protect them, but is also to stand aligned with that friend by holding them accountable for their moral actions, and leading them to a form of moral salvation when moral sin occurs.

LFY08 - [Unit Identity, Diem](#):

Diem articulates the complementary nature of individual and unit identity as being mutually supportive and reinforcing. He further communicates that a positive unit identity is demonstrated in a hardiness and resiliency that fosters competent and capable action in situations that are ambiguous and challenging.

LFY09 - [Trust, Diem](#):

Diem validates the perspective that people join the Army to become the best they can be and, as such, any moral misconduct they become aware of or directly experience becomes an attack on the moral integrity of the individual, and ultimately the organization to which one belongs. Thus, sub-cultures develop within organizations. Trust becomes a means by which: we recognize where others stand, what the standards of behavior are; organizations and its members can do the right thing; and when wrong occurs, hold one another accountable for doing the right thing, thereby seeking excellence.

LFY10 - [Discipline, Diem](#):

Diem recognizes the incongruence and ambiguity that exists in warfighting and Soldiering. He states that there are sometimes collisions between rules and regulations and actual circumstances. Discipline then is the key that enables one to connect the dots between the rules and actions, particularly when tensions between the two exist. Discipline, he argues, contributes to the ability of the individual and the organization to continue to act in accordance with rules, policies, and procedures when incongruences and tensions arise between expectations and reality.

LFY11 - Identity, Goodwin:

Goodwin speaks about his family history of military service and its impact on his desire to serve as well. This was, for him, solidified upon reading a short book on tanks which inspired him to fully commit to military service. He was both a Guardsman and active duty Soldier, and both enlisted and officer, whose service impacted who he was, and what he wanted to do and be - a servant to the country through military service.

LFY12 - Personal Impact, Goodwin:

Goodwin recounts the aftermath of his combat experiences, but primarily discusses the aftermath of the incident in March 2006. He recalls how he struggled, and still struggles with the after effects of the actions of these few Soldiers. He continues to deal with the residuals of self-blame and recrimination, anger over events he could not control, a sense of lingering physical and psychological tiredness, and the grinding slog of emotional turmoil over this incident, as well as the follow on legal, professional, and personal challenges he faced as Bravo Company Commander.

LFY13 - Stewardship, Wintrich:

Wintrich relives the impact of the experiences of his childhood in a military family as the sights and stories motivated him to join the Army Profession. For him, joining the Army family was about its mission and the prestige of participating in the noble profession of Soldiering. He relays the impact of those who mentored him in his career, and how he sees it as his professional responsibility to mentor others to achieve the excellence he learned growing up and as a junior officer.

LFY14 - [Trust, Wintrich](#):

Deployed in a hotly contested area of Iraq, Wintrich articulates the power and importance of trust as the bedrock of command and mission accomplishment. He rightly believes that trust is a component of military experience that is built and sustained, and not a static one. It cannot be turned on in the heat of deployment and mission, but is instead needed prior to mission activities so that commanders can know that those in positions of leadership are making sound decisions, and doing the right thing, especially, when separated from the Command HQ. He acknowledges that a lack of trust up and down the chain of command debilitates and hinders mission success.

LFY15 - [Taking Leave, Wintrich](#):

Wintrich shows the tension between duty and personal needs. He argues that leaders who are effective and successful prepare others and build confidence with members of their unit to continue to thrive and excel in their absence. He states that the absence of the leader should not shape conditions for minimal performance and the commission of crimes, but rather should allow the opportunity for those left behind to perform optimally, with excellence. Training, education, mentorship, and leadership must positively form and shape subordinates to carry on no matter who is in the lead.

LFY16 - Combat Stress, Reese:

As an enlisted leader with numerous deployments, Reese explains the impact of continuous, high tempo operations on the physical, physiological, and psychological health of individuals and the unit. He does not shy away from the realities of Soldiering, particularly the death, stress, and lack of leader presence that comes with combat operations as they transform and form the performance and perspectives of Soldiers under stress. He validates the importance of stress decompression during operations as a means for gaining equilibrium, understanding, and strengthening personal and organizational resilience.

LFY17 - Fellow Commander, Pt. 1 – Stroh:

Stroh discusses his relationship with a friend and colleague who operated in one of the most contested areas of Iraq, and the deterioration his friend experienced personally, professionally, and psychically as he endured the stress of combat, loss of life, lack of personnel and materiel for his mission all the while under the cloud of being “fired” by the Battalion Commander. Stroh’s description shows what the leader of Bravo Company experienced, the loneliness of command, and the struggles Stroh endured as he sought to encourage and support his fellow commander as a friend and professional.

LFY17- Fellow Commander, Pt. 2 – Stroh:

Stroh further elaborates on his efforts to support his friend and colleague who experienced difficulties and struggles from multiple fronts - personal, professional, psychological. As he discusses his approach to providing support, he shares how he himself struggled with the best way to do so as both peer and friend. The context in which both commanded shows that the complexities and burdens of leadership cannot be overstated, nor can one be shielded from them.

LFY18 - Civil-Military Relations, Frederick

Frederick rightly identifies both the necessity and tensions of the intersection of civilian control and military expertise. Further, he argues, that the military cannot be a truly effective, self-policing agent, because the military is a closed system ripe for abuse, misconduct, and disorganization. Thus, he states that civilian control is needed to provide balance to the profession of arms as it serves the American people.