High People-High Mission: The Power of Caring Leadership as Experienced in the Air Force

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A Dissertation

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Abstract

On the surface, caring and the military appear to be opposites. The stereotypical image of the military giving and obeying orders does not conjure up images of leaders caring for their subordinates. In reality, caring for subordinates and caring for the mission could help leaders form stronger relationships with subordinates, because subordinates may have confidence that their leaders will not recklessly send them into harm’s way. Subordinates may develop confidence in their leaders based on their leaders’ care during non-combat environments. Yet, empirical studies of caring in the military are sparse. This study investigates how Air Force retirees characterize “great bosses” care for them and care for the mission. A mixed method study of 12 qualitative interviews with Air Force retirees, followed by a quantitative survey study of 226 Air Force retirees revealed that caring actions cluster into four themes: Caring for Subordinates Personally, Caring for Subordinates Professionally, Caring for the Mission with a Focus on Mission Execution, and Caring for the Mission with a Focus on Empowering the Unit. This study also examined how these subordinates responded to those bosses that cared for them through Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with the Boss. The dissertation findings operationalize caring, demonstrate correlations between caring actions and self-reported increases in performance and boss-subordinate relationship quality, and detail actions that an authentic, caring leader can take to pursue the flourishing of subordinates and mission success simultaneously. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, http://aura.antioch.edu/ and Ohiolink ETD Center, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/

Keywords: Air Force, bosses, mixed methods, leadership, care, caring, caring leadership, military culture, military leadership, servant leadership, virtuous leadership.
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Chapter I: Introduction

At the heart of leadership is caring. Without caring, leadership has no purpose. And without showing others that you care and what you care about, other people won’t care about what you say or what you know. (Kouzes & Posner, 1999, p. xi)

The currency of caring reaches beyond profits and inspires action. (Crandall, 2005, p. 21)

Leaders, I shall argue, will always be judged by their followers against their ability to demonstrate that they care. (Gabriel, 2015, p. 317)

In 2014, Colonel Donald Grannan posted an article on the official United States Air Force website (Grannan, 2014). There, he detailed the events which led to a young airman separating from the Air Force. In essence, Col. Grannan described a situation which could be perceived as the airman’s chain of command not caring about or for the airman as a person—and subsequently not caring if she stayed in the Air Force or not. Col. Grannan’s article, published on a blog site, received many responses affirming similar experiences.

Recently, the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) reported a pilot shortage; only 34.3 percent of fighter pilots sign up for five more years of duty versus a desired rate of 65 percent. According to the SECAF, the main reason pilots are separating is because of commercial airline hiring (James, 2016). Yet, Col Grannan’s article raises additional questions about how caring from Air Force leadership might influence members to stay on active duty, rather than pursue jobs with commercial airlines.

My Positionality

I became interested in the topic of caring leadership through my 37-year career as an Air Force officer and civilian employee. I am a retired United States Air Force colonel. I entered active duty in 1980 and retired in 2006. Upon retirement, I worked first as a support contractor and subsequently took a position as an Air Force civilian employee. I have invested a great deal of time and of my life over the past 37 years in the Air Force, and I know this environment very
well. Leadership within the Air Force context has been of particular interest to me since the late 1980s. I have deliberately endeavored to grow my personal leadership abilities and to pass on what I have learned in my career to junior officers and civilians so that they will be better equipped to lead than I was when I entered active duty.

**Genesis of the Power of Caring Leadership as Experienced by Air Force Retirees**

In my Air Force career, two bosses motivated me to pursue my job in ways no others had. For many years, I have looked back and wondered how these two bosses could touch me and other subordinates deep in our hearts and motivate us to achieve great accomplishments while other bosses could not. In like manner, I have wondered how I could motivate my teams in a similar fashion.

In the summer of 2015, I asked 10 Air Force retirees the following three questions:

- How many great bosses have you had?
- What made them great versus good?
- How did you respond or react to these great bosses?

To my surprise, each responded by saying: “two or three bosses were great;” “the great bosses were great because they cared about me and they cared about the mission.” Mission is defined as:

The task, together with the purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore . . . In common usage, especially when applied to lower military units, a duty assigned to an individual or unit; a task. (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2016, p. 155)

The Air Force retirees also stated, “I responded by working even harder than normal . . . I took care of my boss because he took care of me . . . I would take a bullet for that boss.” Some gave me examples of actions the great bosses took that showed they cared. And some elaborated on how much more motivated they were when they worked for one of these great bosses.
The retirees’ comments intimated that their great bosses demonstrated they cared about them by valuing and respecting them and by helping them grow personally and professionally. Likewise, the retirees’ comments intimated that their great bosses demonstrated that they cared about the mission by exhibiting its importance through their actions and their personal dedication to its success. It was also clear that the great bosses did not place mission success above the retirees’ welfare nor did they place retirees’ happiness above the mission’s success. These great bosses simultaneously cared about their subordinates and the mission, and they pursued the best for their subordinates and for the mission without sacrificing either one. In Air Force parlance, this is being “High People and High Mission” at the same time. This type of caring had significant impact upon these retirees, instilled great loyalty, and motivated them to perform at much higher levels.

Leadership theories and practices that incorporate aspects of caring, are segmented into distinct leadership models, such as transformational (Bass & Riggio, 2006), authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Eriksen, 2009), servant (Greenleaf, 1970), relational leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011) independently. However, the 10 Air Force retirees’ comments highlighted the possibility that an under-explored leadership approach could explain underlying principles related to transformational, authentic, servant, and relational leadership models. This under-explored leadership approach is what I will call caring leadership, and this dissertation explores caring leadership as experienced by Air Force retirees.

**Understanding Caring Leadership in the Air Force**

**Air Force culture.** To understand caring leadership in the Air Force and in particular the meanings of “cared about me” and “cared about the mission” from the Air Force retirees’ perspective, the context of the Air Force culture is presented. This context can be characterized
by the Air Force’s focus on conducting combat operations, that is, to fly, fight, and win, on accomplishing the mission even if great risks must be taken and personal sacrifices must be made (Department of the Air Force, 2014b), and the necessity of trust between leaders and subordinates (Pfaff, 1998; Sweeney, Thompson, & Blanton, 2009). The idea of taking care of fellow airmen is visualized and embodied in the wingman concept: airmen taking care of airmen. When flying in formation, a pilot’s wingman is off to the side or located behind and is watching the pilot’s side or back. Having situational awareness of an entire circular sphere around a formation is difficult to do. The formation must be aware of an approaching enemy aircraft that could come from any direction. Therefore, pilots rely on other pilots, their wingmen, who are flying behind or beside to see things for each other; hence the name wingman concept: airmen helping airmen.

**Need for trust in the Air Force (military) environment.** Caring contributes to trust. Trust enables military personnel to go confidently into harm’s way knowing: that the mission is worth the risk of death, that their bosses are genuinely looking out for subordinates and have correctly assessed risk and risk mitigation relative to the importance of the mission, and that their bosses will do all they can to ensure military personnel return safely (Mayeroff, 1965; Pfaff, 1998; Sweeney et al., 2009). Given the role trust plays in the military environment, and given the role caring plays in trust-building, caring leadership’s contribution to trust-building is also worthy of review.

**Definitions of Care**

In everyday conversation, the word care is used easily in a variety of ways, but the meaning is not always understood (Shaw, 2011). Like many words, the meaning of care is determined by how it is used and the context of its usage. Care is used in terms of healthcare,
providing care, that is, the nurturing a parent gives a child, and showing fondness. Care is used in phrases such as “I don’t care,” “Take care of yourself,” and “I don’t care for, or want, any more, thank you” (Care, n.d.-b). None of these uses fit within the context of the Air Force retirees’ statements discussed above.

The online *English Oxford Living Dictionaries* provide basic definitions for care, first as a noun and second, as a verb:

**Noun**

1. The provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something. . . .
2. Serious attention or consideration applied to doing something correctly or to avoid damage or risk.
   2.1 An object of concern or attention. . . .
   2.2 A feeling of or occasion for anxiety. . . .

**Verb**

- Feel concern or interest; attach importance to something.
  1.1 Feel affection or liking. . . .
  1.2 Like or be willing to do or have something. . . .
2. Look after and provide for the needs of. (Care, n.d.-a)

These definitions are helpful as a starting point, but further examination of the phrases about the great bosses—“cared about me” and “cared about the mission”—is essential to this dissertation.

The phrase “to care about,” as used by the 10 Air Force retirees can have a variety of meanings; for example:

- Phrasemix, an online service that allows searching for meaningful phrases, says that “to care about a topic means that you’re very interested in it. . . . If you care about a person it means that you like them. That might mean that you feel romantic feelings, and it might not” (Phrasemix, n.d., para. 3–4).
• In the *McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs*, to care about
  “someone or something [is] 1. to hold [it] dear . . . to prize [it] . . . 2. to have even
  minimal regard for someone or something” (Care About, n.d.).

The definitions that I found that fit best within the context of the Air Force retirees’
statements above are from the online *Macmillan Dictionary*:

• To care about subordinates is “to be interested in someone and want them to be well
  and happy” (Care, n.d.-b, para. 1).

• To care about the mission is “to be interested in something and feel strongly that it is
  important” (Care, n.d.-b, para. 2).

**Cared-about me.** Mayeroff (1971) addressed care from a personalist perspective— that
is the centrality of the person—and described experiences of caring and being cared for.
Mayeroff’s purpose was to show how care helps people understand and integrate their lives more
effectively. stated that “to care for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him
grow and actualize himself” (p. 1).

Gilligan (1982) wrote from the perspective that psychological truths—at that time based
solely on a male perspective—had “blinded psychologists to the truth of women’s experiences”
(p. 62). Therefore, she endeavored to bring women’s voices into what she believed is their
rightful place in psychological theory and spoke to relationships, interconnections, and of the
necessary active role of caring in relationships. Gilligan stated: “The ideal of care is thus an
activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining
the web of connection so no one is left alone” (p. 62).

Noddings (1984, 2013) wrote about practical ethics from a feminine perspective. She
added to the discussion by emphasizing the relational aspects of caring, asserting that an ethic of
care has its foundation in relation, and stressing that action which demonstrates caring must be taken for real caring to occur. However, she differentiated between caring-about, which was the term the Air Force retirees used, and caring-for. She said that caring-about “expresses concern but does not guarantee a response to one who needs the care” (Noddings, 2013, p. xiv). Caring-for goes further and “describes the encounter or set of encounters characterized by direct attention and response” (Noddings, 2013, p. xiv).

Though the Air Force retirees said their great bosses cared about them, Noddings (1984, 2013) expands on the meaning of care and implies that the term cared-for more accurately fits the Air Force retirees’ experiences; namely, that their great bosses went beyond having concerns and acted on those concerns by demonstrating care towards the retirees.

Hamington’s (2004) and Noddings’ (1984, 2013) research suggest that caring leadership is not motivated by the leader’s own good. They point to caring leadership as being motivated primarily by wanting the best for those who leadership cares-about and cares-for. Caring leadership wants subordinates to flourish and, so, actions are directed toward others’ betterment. Caring leadership uses its abilities to act on behalf of those cared-for (Hamington 2004; Noddings, 1984, 2013). When leaders care, they step out of their personal space to meet others where they are, considering another’s point of view and another’s needs (Ciulla, 2009; Noddings 2013). Real caring communicates commitment by the care-giver, that is, the caring leader, to the care-receiver, the subordinate or the follower (Noddings, 1984, 2013).

Mayeroff’s (1971), Gilligan’s (1982, 1993), and Noddings’ (1984, 2013) comments on caring identified its building blocks, which can be applied to the leadership context: wanting to see the subordinate succeed, recognizing the leader-subordinate relationship and the role caring plays in that relationship, seeing and knowing the subordinates’ needs, and taking action to meet
those needs to help the subordinate succeed. Appreciating each of these building blocks is necessary to understanding caring leadership in the Air Force. Therefore, Mayeroff’s, Gilligan’s, and Noddings’ conceptualizations of caring suggest that Air Force retirees’ comment, “my great bosses cared-about me,” means their great bosses were genuinely concerned for the Air Force retirees, wanted the best for these retirees, and took actions to help them grow personally and professionally. Research is presented in this dissertation to confirm this meaning.

Cared-about the mission. In turning to address the statement from the Air Force retirees that their great bosses “cared-about the mission,” the question arises: what did they mean? After all, a mission is not a person. How does a leader care-about and for a mission or task?

This type of caring is focused on the mission, much like being focused on a project or principle. Blustein (1991) provided a good explanation of caring focused on a principle or a project and in this case, the mission. He said that when a person cares in this manner, the person identifies in some way with the project; the person invests in the project; the person promulgates the project; and the person takes an active interest in the successful accomplishment of the project. This type of person is committed to the success of the project. This person’s actions are clearly in accordance with his or her commitments and demonstrate that commitment (Blustein, 1991).

Additionally, Kouzes and Posner (1999), based upon “thousands of best practice leadership case studies” (p. xiii), stated that a caring leader has a duty to set the example, to live out the organization’s values and keep commitments. Visibly demonstrating commitment to upholding the organization’s values and mission adds to the credibility of the leader. Generally speaking, Kouzes and Posner accentuate the positive by saying that authentic, heart-driven actions demonstrate that the leader cares for subordinates and the success of the organization.
Therefore, applying the Blustein (1991) and Kouzes and Posner (1999) comments to those made by Air Force retirees, “my great bosses cared-about the mission,” means that the great bosses demonstrated their commitment to the unit’s mission by respecting, valuing, understanding, and actively pursuing the mission’s success.

This dissertation moves beyond Kouzes and Posner’s (1999) claims by researching, identifying, and quantifying specific caring leadership practices simultaneously focused on subordinates betterment and the organization’s mission success, as experienced and witnessed by Air Force subordinates. Furthermore, this dissertation documents subordinates’ responses to leaders who display these caring practices and provides a measure of the potential relationships between the leader’s caring actions and the subordinates’ responses.

Given the aforementioned context and explanations, this dissertation, while exploring the experience of caring leadership among Air Force retirees, views caring leadership as “persuading other people to set aside for a period of time their individual concerns to pursue a common goal that is important for the responsibilities and welfare of the group” (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994, p. 493), being genuinely concerned for and committed to these people, desiring the best for them, and taking action to help them grow personally and professionally, and being concerned for and committed to the group’s goal, which includes respecting, valuing, understanding, and actively pursuing the achievement of the group’s goal. And to use Air Force parlance once again, caring leadership in the Air Force can be characterized as being high-people and high-mission at the same time.

**Caring Leadership in Relationship with Established Leadership Types**

Caring leadership is enabled by relational leadership and authentic leadership, whereas, caring enables transformational leadership and servant leadership.
Relational leadership and the interaction between leader and follower are at the heart of the basic meaning of caring and caring leadership. Relational leadership characterizes leaders and their relationship with their subordinates and how they operate together (Culiffe & Eriksen, 2011). The leader has a sense of responsibility to the subordinates—to be responsive, responsible, and accountable for everyday interactions.

People who display true, altruistic caring leadership are genuinely and authentically concerned for and committed to the individual people they touch without regard of personal gain (Bennis & Goldsmith, 2013). Authentic leadership is characterized by understanding followers in a deeper more genuine and human manner with relational transparency, which in turn produces a more effective caring leader (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Eriksen, 2009).

Transformational leadership’s individualized attention includes caring about and for the needs of the followers and their development (Bass & Riggio, 2006) and helps followers grow personally and professionally. Furthermore, transformational leadership’s idealized influence values, elevates, and creates a collective sense of mission, that is, caring about and for the mission, within an organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Servant leadership is strongly based in ethical and caring behavior (Spears 2010). Caring is the vehicle the servant leader uses to meet the needs of subordinates (van der Vyver, Van der Westhuizen, & Meyer, 2014).

Relational leadership and authentic leadership both enable the success of caring leadership. Caring toward people and the mission enables both transformational leadership and servant leadership to operate successfully. The core of caring leadership is common to all four types of leadership. Figure 1.1 illustrates the relationship caring leadership has with these other type of leadership and is explained more in-depth in Chapter II, the literature review.
Several studies have described and measured the presence and impact of caring leadership. Training documents have also discussed the value and impact of caring leadership in the United States Army; illustrative examples follow. The Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (van der Vyver et al., 2014) discussed the questionnaire as an instrument “that measures the extent of care given by school leaders (principals) to primary school teachers” (p. 1). Keeler and Kroth (2012) developed the Measure of Managerial Carator Behaviors (MMCB), a Likert-type survey instrument that measures managerial caring behaviors. Crandall (2005) and Woodruff (2005)—who are both professors in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the U. S. Military Academy at West Point—discussed caring leadership in the Army, its importance, its value, and its impact on subordinates and the mission. Yet, no article or instrument was found that specifically described or measured caring leadership behaviors and responses in the Air Force.
Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the understanding of caring leadership in the Air Force. This dissertation’s overall objective is to describe the practices of caring leadership as experienced by Air Force retirees and to describe their responses to these practices, especially in the context of caring leadership that is focused on both subordinates and the mission simultaneously. The dissertation’s research and findings may contribute to Air Force leadership development.

This dissertation was framed by the following boundaries. First, the research focused on military retirees only. My rationale for this choice was that active duty military of the Air Force could face privacy concerns that might affect their responses, if asked to assess their bosses’ caring behaviors. Moreover, retirees have much more experience to draw on than many active duty members, in terms of having had a greater number of bosses throughout their careers.

Second, interviews and the survey focused on subordinates to gain their views in a subordinate role and not in a leader role: I sought their experiences as receivers of caring actions, witnesses of caring actions toward the mission, and responses to bosses who displayed caring actions. Thus, the study did not assess leaders’ felt or intended demonstrations of caring toward subordinates.

Third, the research focused on the non-combat environment; combat situations were not included in the study. As such, the research did not address any tension between caring and leadership decisions regarding combat assignments.

Fourth, the phrase High People-High Mission, purports that the leader cares for subordinates by valuing and focusing on both their betterment and the mission’s success simultaneously. Yet, there are three other possibilities, which this dissertation does not address. A leader could potentially care about neither the people nor the mission (Low People—Low
Mission), care about the mission, but not the people (Low People—High Mission), or care about the people, but not the mission (High People-Low Mission). This dissertation does not address these other three possibilities.

**Overarching Study Questions**

The overarching questions pursued by this research are:

- How do Air Force retirees describe caring leadership in the Air Force as it relates to caring for the subordinates and for the mission?
- When Air Force retirees experienced caring leadership, how did they respond?

**Dissertation Structure**

The review of the literature for this dissertation revealed a gap in research addressing caring leadership in the Air Force and a lack of understanding of how Air Force subordinates respond to caring leadership. This dissertation is designed to address this gap in understanding. The following briefly summarizes the chapters that follow:

Chapter II—Literature Review: The literature review presents research studies that address key themes and research on caring, caring leadership, and responses to caring leadership. The review builds upon the above introduction by exploring the meaning of caring, how caring is employed in management, education, and nursing contexts, and caring leadership’s impact upon the U. S. Army. Due to the role relational leadership and authentic leadership play in caring and the role caring plays in transformational leadership and servant leadership, literature is also reviewed to define these roles and the relationships between these leadership types (see Figure 1.1). Because accomplishing the Air Force’s military mission involves potential harm to its
members, which is quite different than most civilian careers, Air Force instructions\(^1\) were reviewed to identify language pertaining to the role caring leadership plays in conducting the Air Force mission. The literature search yielded little information pertaining to caring leadership in the Air Force. Therefore, addressing this dissertation’s overarching questions fills this gap in understanding caring leadership in the Air Force.

Chapter III—Methodology: This chapter describes the mixed-methods approach I used to conduct this research. Phase 1 was qualitative. I interviewed 12 Air Force retirees and learned how they describe caring leadership. Using the data from the Phase 1 interviews, I designed a survey in Phase 2, which was responded to by 226 Air Force retirees, to measure their perceptions of and responses to caring leadership, as described in Phase 1. The chapter presents the details of the procedures I followed in executing Phases 1 and 2 and the analyses of the data gathered in each phase.

Chapter IV—Research Findings and Results: This chapter presents the findings from Phase 1 (qualitative) and Phase 2 (quantitative) of this research. I present the core concepts and themes that emerged from the qualitative Phase 1 interviews. I then present the results of survey analyses that described the prominence of caring leadership practices and responses to caring leadership. Chapter IV also includes a comparative analysis of various sub-groups within the participant pool. A regression analysis, with the caring actions as independent variables and the behavior responses to these caring actions as the dependent variables, is also presented as is information gained from narrative questions contained in the survey. Correlational analysis

\(^1\) Air Force Instructions are equivalent to regulations. They were called “Regulations” until the mid-1990s when the language moved from being very specifically rigid and regulatory to more open, instructional, and flexible. Subsequently, the instructions have taken on the same regulatory requirements are treated as regulations today.
between caring categories and sub-themes and correlational analysis between caring actions and responses, are also reported in Chapter IV.

Chapter V—Discussions of Findings and Future Implications: This chapter turns the quantitative analyses found in Chapter IV into a discussion of caring leadership. The chapter revisits the conceptualization of caring leadership in light of the research findings. It also addresses the implications of this research for leadership theory and practice, and discusses future research directions.
Chapter II: Literature Review

The purpose of this dissertation is to describe caring leadership in the Air Force and to describe and measure how Air Force personnel respond to caring leadership, when leadership simultaneously focuses on both the people and the mission. To address this topic, an initial library database search of the three topics—caring, leadership, and Air Force—was conducted. A Venn diagram (Figure 2.1) depicts the intersection of these topics.

![Venn Diagram](image)

*Figure 2.1. Literature search Venn Diagram.*

This focused search did not yield articles that describe caring leadership behaviors specific to the Air Force or instruments that measure responses to caring leadership by Air Force personnel. Two sources mentioned care in the Air Force: Air Force Instruction 1-1, Air Force Standards, points out each airman’s “obligation to care for teach, and lead others” (Department of the Air Force, 2014a, p. 12) and Air Force Instruction 36-2618, The Enlisted Force Structure, speaks to the Wingman concept and includes the statement that “Airmen take care of fellow airmen” (Department of the Air Force, 2014a, p. 7). The Army takes a strong position about caring leadership, stating: “A leader maintains a healthy balance between caring for people and their families while focusing on the mission” (Headquarters Department of the Army, 2012, p. 7-1). A broader search yielded numerous sources that addressed a wide variety of topics regarding caring. In the following discussion these sources are grouped into these topics:
• Foundational concepts of care and caring,
• virtuous leadership,
• caring leadership focused on subordinates,
• caring leadership focused on the mission,
• caring leadership relative to other leadership types,
• caring leadership in the Air Force, and
• summary and future research.

The following discussion on caring and caring leadership begins from a broad perspective and narrows down to focus specifically on caring leadership in the Air Force. As this chapter progresses through the literature review, key findings will be reviewed in terms of their application to this dissertation’s context. This approach informs the reader on the subject of caring in general (Blustein, 1991; Engster; 2007; Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2006; Noddings, 1984; Tronto, 1993); identifies key topics pertinent to this dissertation’s focus (Aristotle, trans. 2009; Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Dutton & Glynn, 2008; Dutton, Workman, & Hardin, 2014; Gabriel, 2015; Kanov et al., 2004; Sweeney et al., 2009), and concludes by identifying the lack of specific research regarding how subordinates respond to caring leadership in the Air Force. The ultimate objective of this dissertation is to deepen understanding of caring leadership practices and responses, specifically in the Air Force context.

**Foundational Concepts of Care and Caring**

Interestingly, many definitions of care in Chapter I speak to feelings and interest and emotions in caring but do not address the act of demonstrating care. However, a number of authors wrote about the necessity of demonstrating actions of caring so that “real caring” can occur.
Mayeroff (1965) addressed care from a personalist (centrality of the person) perspective in his article “On Caring.” He focused on characterizing the experiences of caring and being cared for. He saw the concept of caring not in a temporal way, such as liking someone, but through a “long-term development perspective much like how friendship and trust are created and the deepening of a relationship” (p. 462). Caring recognizes the relationship and the differences between the care-giver and the care-receiver. According to Mayeroff this “shared sense of difference actually creates a sense of oneness between the two and creates a sense of sharing something that is common between both parties” (p. 464). Worth is attributed to a person we care for because that person is an individual in his or her own right. “We help this person to grow, to realize himself” (p. 465). Mayeroff (1965) had a two-pronged definition of helping someone grow:

To help him [a person] to care, to care for, to take care of, and it involves encouraging and assisting him to find and create his own areas in which he is able to care and more broadly to help the other person to take care of himself, and by becoming responsive to his own needs to care to become responsible for his own life. . . . To enable him [a person] to learn in the degree that he is able, where learning is to be thought of primarily as the re-creation of our person through integration of new experiences and ideas, rather than as the mere addition of information and technique. (p. 465)

According to these definitions, caring involves being committed to another person and being devoted to that person. Through acts of devotion, caring develops its own character as it “overcomes obstacles and difficulties” (Mayeroff, 1965, p. 466). A care giver is genuinely humble and is more interested in learning about and encouraging the care-receiver’s betterment than his or her own personal betterment.

A major theme in Mayeroff’s (1971) subsequent book, also titled On Caring, is the purpose of caring, and the purpose caring brings to one’s life. Mayeroff used the relationship between the care-giver and the care-receiver to inform the reader on both aspects of caring’s
purpose. Mayeroff (1971) said that “to care for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him grow and actualize himself” (p. 1).

Mayeroff (1971) emphasized the importance of the care-giver knowing the care-receiver’s needs so that the care-giver can properly respond to those needs. This means the care-giver must have a good understanding of the care-receiver: who the receiver is, the receiver’s strengths and weaknesses, and what will help the receiver flourish. Likewise, the care-giver must know his or her own strengths and weaknesses to know if he or she can properly respond to the care-receiver’s needs (p. 19).

Further, Mayeroff (1971) wrote that “caring has a way of ordering activities around itself; it becomes primary and other activities and values come to secondary” (p. 65). Therefore, “caring provides a center or focus that integrates activities and life’s experiences” (p. 66). To Mayeroff, caring is shaped by one’s “distinctive powers” (p. 70) or “particular gifts” (p. 71), in who the person is, and by the execution of those powers and gifts. Mayeroff’s view was that caring, rooted in who a person is, brings meaning and purpose of life. Mayeroff’s work laid a foundation regarding relationship, caring, and the purpose of caring upon which others (Blustein, 1991; Gilligan, 1982; Lyman, 2000; Noddings, 1984) followed.

Gilligan (1982) recognized the relational aspect of care just as Mayeroff (1965, 1971) did and added to the discussion by addressing caring’s role in moral development. Gilligan felt that her mentor, Lawrence Kohlberg, did not account for women’s perspectives regarding moral development and the ethic of justice, where objective decisions were sought to resolve dilemmas. In her book, In A Different Voice, Gilligan (1982) introduced a “different voice,” namely the voice of women, and discussed the role care plays in moral development and specifically the role it plays in building and strengthening relationships. “The ideal of care is thus an activity of
relationship, of seeing and responding to need” (p. 62). This relationship is a dynamic interdependent connection between two people, which is sustained through responsive, mutual caring actions that in turn contribute to the betterment of both parties. Later, in a second and revised edition of her book, Gilligan (1993) wrote that she wanted “to bring women’s voices into psychological theory and speak to relationships, interconnections, and of the necessary active role of caring in relationships” (p. xxvi).

Noddings (1984), in *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education*, wrote about practical ethics from a feminist perspective. She discussed the relational aspects of caring, stating that an ethic of caring has its foundation in relations much as Mayeroff (1971) and Gilligan (1982) had stated. She added to the overall discussion by stressing that action must be taken for real caring to occur. She differentiated between “caring about” (the term the Air Force retirees used, as described in Chapter I here) and “caring for.” She said that caring-about only expresses concern but does not guarantee a response to the one who needs the care. Caring-for goes further and points to the encounter or set of encounters or actions that occur subsequent to the original concern. Noddings (1984) said:

> When we care, we should, ideally, be able to present reasons for our action or inaction which would persuade a reasonable, disinterested observer that we have acted in behalf of the cared-for . . . caring involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into another’s. When we care, we consider the other’s point of view, his or her objective needs, and what he or she expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is for the other, not on ourselves . . . to act as one-caring, then, is to act with special regard for the particular person in a concrete situation. We act not to achieve for ourselves a commendation but to protect or enhance the welfare of the cared-for. (p. 24)

Building upon Mayeroff (1965, 1971), Gilligan (1982), and Noddings (1984), Blustein (1991) wrote from an individual perspective in his book *Care and Commitment: Taking the Personal Point of View*. According to this book’s cover, Blustein presented a “comprehensive
study of an ethics of care that explores human care in various forms: the concern for and commitment to personal projects, individuals, principles, and ideals.” Blustein (1991) wrote:

The care orientation focuses on ingredients and conditions of the good life: on commitment to the good of particular others, and on the formation and maintenance of a sense of self-identity through dedication to projects, principles, and so on, that give one’s life meaning and direction. (p. 7)

Further, Blustein observed: “There cannot be commitment without care, there can be care without commitment” (p. 11). This is very similar to Noddings’ (2013) comments regarding to care about (having concern) versus care for—going beyond merely having concern and taking action in accordance with that concern.

Blustein (1991) brings out how caring about and for another becomes part of one’s own self, stating, “maintenance of a sense of self-identity is an extension of Mayeroff’s (1971) comments” (p. 59). From this perspective, another’s growth becomes an extension of one’s own; as a person helps someone to grow, the person grows as well. These concur with Gilligan’s (1982) comments regarding how women’s rights and responsibilities (and self-maintenance) are integrated through the relation of care, and Noddings’ (1984) view about the reciprocity of a caring relationship—both the care-giver and the care-receiver mutually need each other—and, so, caring supports the maintenance of both parties’ ethical self. Though he defined the phrases “care about” and “care for” differently than Noddings (1984) did, Blustein (1991) enriched the meaning of the above phrases on caring:

- “To care for” can, in certain contexts, mean to like, have affection for, be drawn or be attracted to, or be pleased by (p. 27). For example: someone “does not care for lobster” . . . or in a husband and wife interchange, they may say “you don’t care for me anymore” . . . or “of course I still care for you” (p. 27).
• “To ‘have care of’ is to have the responsibility for supervising, managing, providing for, attending to needs or performing services. For example: caring for the sick or elderly” (p. 27).

• “To care about means to be invested in someone or something” (Frankfurt as cited in Blustein, 1991, p. 27). Blustein continued by saying that when a person “cares about another person or a project, then the care-giver has an interest in X and takes an interest in X” (p. 29).

• “To care that” is “propositional and has a situation as its object. Example: if S cares that X happens, then S is invested in X’s happening or not happening” (p. 28).

By way of example, the parent child relationship reflects all four meanings: “parents care for their children, have care of them, care about them, and care that they flourish” (Blustein, 1991, p. 28). Blustein (1991) explained, further, that “caring about,” as in the caring that exists in being “in love or having a close friendship, is basically disinterested care: that is, it is care given for the benefit of the recipient and is not aimed at the care-giver’s advantage or made conditional upon the recipient’s response” (p. 31). There is also “self-interested caring” (p. 31); this is care that is given mainly to benefit the care-giver personally. Caring-about moves the caregiver to action (either selflessly or selfishly) and “presupposes that the caregiver has already identified the care-receiver’s state or situation as being good or bad and worthy of the caring action” (Blustein, 1991, pp. 33–34). Blustein elaborated:

I take an interest in the things and people I care about when I make their condition my active concern because I identify myself with them in some way. Even the employer identifies himself or herself in some way with the employees, or else the employer would not care about them at all. . . . A person who truly cares about something will direct his or her life and conduct with reference to it. (pp. 31–32)

Blustein dug even deeper into the explanation of caring:
What I do for or to or with the objects of my care depends, among other things, on the character of what I care about, on my relation to it, and on the particular kind of concern that I feel for it. When I care about an idea, person, cause, or principle in a positive and disinterested way, the worth of each is felt by me inherently and is not just a function of what it is able to do for me. (p. 35)

He further stated:

In general, people care about the objects of their commitment. If I care about something, it must be important to me, and the only valid test for whether something is important to me is whether I do or try to do something about it. (p. 38)

Blustein (1991) provided pertinent wrap-up thoughts:

Who our friends and loved ones are, and what it is we care about, is less chosen than discovered. Nevertheless, the value that we find in them is created by the very fact that we care and are invested in them. (p. 44)

He concluded: “The objects of ‘caring about’ are extremely diverse, including persons (oneself and others), communities and traditions, ideas and ideals, material objects, and personal objects” (Blustein, 199, p. 145). Caring about these objects includes the desire and willingness to act for their good.

Similar to Noddings’ (1984), Tronto (1993), in Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care, broadened care ethics into the political realm and stated that caring occurs in four phases: “caring about, taking care of, care-giving, and care-receiving” (p. 106). Care ethics or ethics of care has been defined by Carol Gilligan as:

an ethic grounded in voice and relationships, in the importance of everyone having a voice, being listened to carefully (in their own right and on their own terms) and heard with respect. An ethics of care directs our attention to the need for responsiveness in relationships (paying attention, listening, responding) and to the costs of losing connection with oneself or with others. Its logic is inductive, contextual, psychological, rather than deductive or mathematical. (as cited by Ethics of Care Webteam, 2011, para. 4)

Similarly, Tronto (1993) posits,

Caring about recognizes that a need exists and assesses that the need should be met in some way. Taking care of involves taking on some responsibility for that need and constructing some action to respond to it. Care-giving is the actual act of meeting the
need for care. And care-receiving finds the one cared for responding to the care he or she receives. (Tronto as cited by Hawk, 2011, p. 9)

Held (2006), in *The Ethics of Care*, wrote to further expand care ethics into political, social and global issues. She defined caring as “a relation in which the carer (care-giver) and the cared-for share an interest in their mutual well-being” (p. 35). Held (2006) continued, saying:

Care is a practice involving care-giving . . . care must concern itself with the effectiveness of its efforts to meet needs, but also with the motives with which care is provided . . . ultimately, it seeks good caring relations. (p. 36)

According to Held, the overall goal is establishing caring relationships.

Engster (2007), in *The Heart of Justice: Care Ethics and Political Theory*, “developed a moral and political theory of caring” (p. 4) and argued that “principles of care theory are central to any adequate theory of justice” (p. 5). Engster stated that care can be understood via the following basic definition:

Care is everything we do directly to help individuals to meet their vital biological needs, develop or maintain their basic capabilities, and avoid or alleviate unnecessary or unwanted pain or suffering, so that they can survive, develop, and function in society. (pp. 28–29)

Engster (2007) further stated:

That since all people depend upon some rather fixed forms of caring for their survival, development, and functioning, all people can be said at least implicitly to recognize caring as a moral good. Therefore, care theory should be able to generate a theory of justice that is universally acceptable across different cultural, religious, and moral communities. (p. 16)

In summary, several insights regarding foundational concepts of care and caring can be taken from this literature and applied to caring leadership relevant to this dissertation. The leader and subordinate are in relation to each other (Gilligan, 1982, 1993; Held, 2006; Mayeroff, 1965, 1971; Noddings, 1984, 2013). A person in need of care is an individual and therefore worthy of caring actions by the leader (Mayeroff, 1965). A caring leader is focused on the betterment and actualization of the subordinates and works to protect and enhance the basic capabilities and
welfare of the subordinates (Engster, 2007; Mayeroff, 1965, 1971; Noddings, 1984). The leader—if a caring leader—should display disinterested caring in the sense of caring about and for the subordinates, for their benefit, not for the benefit of the leader (Blustein, 1991). Caring is comprised of two elements: the inclination or motivation or concern to care and the action of caring. Complete caring exists when both are involved (Blustein, 1991; Noddings, 1984, 2013; Tronto, 1993).

Caring leadership employs the combined concept of caring about and for. Most authors tend to address care from a perspective of personal relationships only. However, Blustein (1991) wrote about the commitment that comes with caring and broadened the idea of caring beyond persons: “The objects of caring are extremely diverse, including persons (oneself and others), communities and traditions, ideas and ideals, material objects, and personal objects” (p. 145); these include concern for and commitment to personal projects. Blustein’s comments regarding caring for people and ideals and projects form a critical perspective for this dissertation as it looks at caring leadership—caring about and for people and the mission—in the Air Force. Therefore, caring leadership an be viewed as “persuading other people to set aside for a period of time their individual concerns to pursue a common goal that is important for the responsibilities and welfare of the group (Hogan et al., 1994, p. 493) Caring leadership is being genuinely concerned for and committed to those one leads, desiring the best for them, and taking action to help them grow personally and professionally, and being concerned for and committed to the group’s goal, which includes respecting, valuing, understanding, and actively pursuing the achievement of the group’s goal.
Virtuous Leadership

The previous section presented a basic understanding of the foundations of care and caring. This dissertation investigates caring leadership when leadership cares about and for people and an ideal or principle or mission while working simultaneously to achieve the best for both. In short, the perspective here is that caring leadership simultaneously works for the success of two foci: people and mission. This section addresses the connectivity between people and mission. It begins with Aristotle’s writings on virtue to help in understanding how a caring leader pursues excellence for both people and the mission simultaneously; it ends with a look at compassion and how it pertains to caring leadership.

Caring leadership as a virtue. Based on Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) writing on virtues, it can be argued that caring leadership, with its focus on caring for both the subordinates and the mission, is a virtue, a single excellence of character, of the leader. Central to the way Aristotle ascribed significance to virtues was the idea of human flourishing or eudaemonia seen as “the ultimate best” (Cameron, 2011, p. 27) that humans could aspire to. In the context of this dissertation, flourishing is further defined as having salvation, integrity, wholeness (or completeness), blessedness, well-being (including reconciliation and justice and peace), unity and community, connectedness, physical and material prosperity (including health and contentment), and moral or ethical straightforwardness (Pennington, 2015; Rogers, Bamat, & Ideh, 2008; Whelchel, 2013). This definition can be applied to the flourishing of an individual or it can define how a person contributes to the flourishing of relationships and society (Coward & Smith, 2004).
Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) three criteria of a virtue are: as the mean between two vices; it focuses on the flourishing of the subject or subjects; and that a virtue is situationally dependent. Caring leadership meets these criteria.

Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) first condition of a virtue is that it exists as a mean between two extremes or vices. Caring leadership can be seen as the mean between two extremes or vices: the first is leadership solely focusing on subordinates to the detriment of the mission, and the second vice is leadership exclusively concentrating on the mission to the detriment of the subordinates. In the first—overly caring about and for subordinates—the leader has such a strong desire to help or to please the subordinates that the mission is paralyzed and incapable of successful execution. In this case, the leader is too focused on the subordinates and cannot make good decisions regarding the mission.

The second extreme or vice is when the leader overly focuses on the mission and is driven, because of personal or technical reasons, to execute the mission to perfection, and has no regard for the negative impact his or her actions have on the subordinates. In this case, the leader is too focused on the mission and cannot make good decisions regarding subordinates. Both extremes are vices. The mean between these two vices is where a proper (healthy) amount of attention is paid to subordinates’ flourishing without paralyzing mission execution and a proper (appropriate) amount of attention and resources are used to execute the mission successfully without neglecting subordinates. Since caring leadership is the mean between two vices, it meets Aristotle’s first condition of a virtue.

Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) second condition for virtue is to focus on the flourishing of the subject or subjects. Caring leadership is focused simultaneously on the excellence (flourishing) of the subordinates’ state (subject one) and the excellence (success or flourishing) of the
mission’s state (subject two). Since caring leadership is focused on the flourishing of both subjects then caring leadership meets the second condition of Aristotle’s virtue description.

Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) third condition of a virtue is to be situationally dependent. The context itself creates the situation where a particular virtue can present itself. A subordinate confessing a major error to a superior is an example of a situation where the virtues of bravery and integrity could be present. When a particular situation arises that requires a leader to care for subordinates and the mission (or job or project) simultaneously, then caring leadership could present itself to meet the need. Therefore, in meeting Aristotle’s third criterion, caring leadership can be considered a virtue.

Hackett and Wang (2012) also contributed to the idea that caring is a virtue, drawing on the ideas of both Aristotle and Confucius. Their review of literature regarding seven leadership types (moral, ethical, spiritual, charismatic, transformational, and visionary) found “59 virtues/character traits” (p. 883). Of these,² caring is “one of nine [that] are common across all the literature” (p. 883).

Building upon the concept of a virtue being an excellence of character (Aristotle, trans. 2009; Hackett & Wang, 2012) and a virtue providing the “moral foundation for action” (Hackett and Wang, 2012, p. 874), Cameron (2011) wrote that “virtuousness refers to a constellation of virtues in the aggregate” (p. 27). Therefore, virtuous leadership refers to leadership that is characterized by the “constellation of virtues” (Cameron, 2011, p. 27) of the leader himself or herself. Virtuous caring leaders are authentic and empathetic in their interaction with subordinates. They are authentic in their commitment to individuals and see subordinates as valued partners rather than commodities or inconveniences; subordinates are seen as valued

² According to Hackett and Wang (2012), the others are courage, honesty, integrity, justice, prudence, responsibility, temperance, and trustworthiness.
“‘yous’ rather than merely ‘its’” (Buber, Wilson & Ferch as cited by Caldwell & Dixon, 2010, p. 93). These leaders value and have respect and consideration for their subordinates and do not see them as pawns on a chessboard. These virtuous caring leaders have the ability to “communicate to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves” (Caldwell & Dixon, 2010, p. 93). Caring leaders understand subordinates’ feelings and have respect for their desires. They are deeply committed to certain principles and actions and are constantly refining their actions into better practice for the betterment of the subordinates. The well-being (flourishing) of their followers/subordinates is a priority, and they are committed to the flourishing and growth of their subordinates.

Literature on caring suggests that caring leadership is not motivated for one’s own good but by desiring the best for subordinates. Caring leadership wants others to flourish and takes actions directed toward others’ betterment; caring leadership uses one’s abilities to act on behalf of those cared-about and cared-for, as seen by Hamington (2004) whose research contributed to the evolving understanding of care by attending to its embodied aspects. Hamington addressed “how physicality—the embodied nature—contributes to care and explored how such embodied care advances social morality” (p. 2), which should be considered constant and universal throughout society.

When leadership cares, it steps out of its personal space to meet others where they are, considering others’ points of view and others’ needs, according to Ciulla (2009) who reviewed literature on caring for others as taking responsibility for them. Caring demonstrates commitment by the care-giver—in this case the caring leader—to the care-receiver, the subordinates or followers (Noddings, 1984, 2013). Pfeffer’s (1994) book, written as a text for organizations and the labor markets, reached much the same conclusions.
**Positive organizational scholarship.** In a chapter on Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS), Dutton and Glynn (2008) saw it as a “broad framework” (p. 1) focused on “positive outcomes, processes, and attributes of organizations and their members” (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 3). Dutton and Glynn highlighted that POS also focuses on virtues—such as caring, as described above—and compassion in organizations (a construct that overlaps with caring) and lends additional insight into how caring leadership and its focus both on subordinates’ flourishing and on mission success, affects organizational outcomes.

POS has “three core aspects: a concern for flourishing at individual, work group, and organizational levels; a focus on developing strengths and capabilities; and an emphasis on the generative life-giving dynamics of organizing” (Dutton & Glynn, 2008, p. 1). It focuses on those forces within an organization that members would say are “excellent, thriving, flourishing, abundant, resilient, or virtuous” (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 3) and attempts to build upon them and make them even stronger, rather than focusing on “weaknesses and roadblocks” (Kelly & Cameron, 2017, p. 1). In their review of “how POS interventions were implemented in two different businesses,” they noted how POS “led to extraordinarily successful performance in each business” (p. 207).

In regards to POS, individual flourishing and organizational flourishing have similar attributes. At the group rather than individual level, flourishing may be described as being healthy, creative, innovative, growing, and resilient (Dutton & Glynn, 2008).

Cameron, Bright, and Caza’s (2004) research, with the objective to determine the relationship between organizational virtuousness and performance, showed that organizational virtuousness, as elaborated upon in the POS framework, is “positively and significantly related to organizational performance” (p. 778). The authors concluded by saying that their study suggests:
“When virtuous behavior is displayed by organization members and enabled by organizational systems and processes, the organization achieves higher levels of desired outcomes” (p. 783).

In the discussion above, caring has as its objective, the flourishing of the care receiver, and caring leadership has as its objective the flourishing of subordinates and the health of the organization; these work together toward successfully accomplishing the organization’s mission. In like manner, Spreitzer and Porath (2014), reviewing the idea of “thriving at work” (p. 45) and how to enable it, discussed how POS enhances organizational and individual thriving or flourishing. Specific examples of POS actions leadership follow below.

Sharing information and fostering an understanding of where an organization is going and its objectives, how the organization will accomplish those objectives, and the role employees play in meeting the organization’s objectives, “increases the employees’ competence and feelings of vitality and growth” (Spreitzer & Porath, 2014, p. 49). The employees have a heightened “sense of learning and developing” (p. 49) because they understand their roles and where they fit within the organization.

Providing decision-making discretion by empowering others to make decisions that impact their workplace gives employees a sense of “autonomy . . . [and] fuels vitality and growth” (Spreitzer & Porath, 2014, pp. 49–50). This empowerment tells employees that “their voice is valuable to the organization” (p. 50), and, therefore, that they are valuable to the organization. Additionally, when not always given an answer but encouraged to ascertain the best approach, employees learn and continue to grow and thrive.

Incivility, characterized by sarcasm, put-down humor, and demeaning language, prevents thriving from occurring in the workplace. In this type of environment, “fear and anger prevent learning because negative emotions constrain cognition and behaviors” (Spreitzer & Porath,
The opposite is true when leadership has zero tolerance for incivility. Spreitzer and Porath (2014) recognize that under such leadership, “feelings of belonging are fostered which in turn increase feelings of vitality and growth” (p. 51) and “trust and connectivity” (p. 51) work to create an environment conducive to thriving. Leaders offering genuine, constructive, focused, positive feedback “energizes employees to seek their full potential” (Spreitzer & Porath, 2014, p. 51). This type of feedback creates opportunities for learning which over time increases competence and employees “know where they stand regarding their skills, competencies, and performance (p. 51), and overall confidence increases.

In taking the POS initiatives above, leaders appreciate the needs of their subordinates, teams, and organizations. Their responses to these needs demonstrate care for those in their organizations and helps them thrive, flourish, and “achieve their goals” (Spreitzer & Porath, 2014, p. 52).

**Care and compassion.** On the opposite end of the spectrum from flourishing is suffering. Compassion responds to suffering and is an area of emphasis among POS researchers that is directly relevant to the current research and to this dissertation.

Dutton et al. (2014) studied compassion “as it unfolds in dyadic interactions in work organizations” (p. 277). They state: “Human suffering within organizations is inevitable” (Dutton et al., 2014, p. 278), and, as Kanov et al. (2004), in their literature review of organization compassion summarized: “Pain and suffering have serious implications for organizational performance and productivity” (p. 809). Compassion, as the desire to alleviate suffering (Compassion, n.d.), is valuable to leaders. Compassion occurs when concern and caring responses meet suffering (Dutton et al., 2014).
Care and compassion are both considered virtues in moral, ethical, spiritual, servant, charismatic, transformational, and visionary leadership types (Hackett & Wang, 2012). Care and compassion are considered virtuous concepts (Cameron et al., 2004). Kahn’s (1993) qualitative case study examined “caring for care givers” (p. 539), providing a system level perspective on widespread job burn-out in relation to qualities of internal networks of care giving relationships. Kahn found that compassion is one of eight behavioral dimensions of caregiving (the remaining seven being accessibility, inquiry, attention, validation, empathy, support, and competency). According to Kahn’s findings, compassion is the sole behavioral dimension that references the emotional connection between the care-giver and the care-receiver.

As seen above, literature offers two views of caring and compassion: either having relational equality (Cameron et al., 2004; Hackett & Wang, 2012) or having a primary and secondary relationship (Kahn, 1993). Both views contribute to understanding compassion and its relationship with caring.

Care and compassion have much in common, and in some literature they are spoken of as co-occurring (Frost, Dutton, Worline, & Wilson, 2000; Grant, 2012; Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). Compassion and care are both relational in nature, and both mean valuing and respecting others (Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2006; Kanov et al., 2004; Mayeroff, 1971; Noddings, 1984). Caring involves intention and action (Blustein, 1991; Noddings, 1984). Compassion includes noticing—becoming aware of the pain someone is in; feeling—possessing a social emotion of suffering with the person who is in pain or discomfort; and responding—acting to remove the suffering (Kanov et al., 2004).

Von Dietze and Orb (2000), exploring the concept of compassion and its implications for nursing practice, observed that compassion’s feeling brings a deeper emotional element to care
and connection with others. Compassion can be characterized as “an empathic emotional response elicited by another person’s suffering that moves people to act in a way that will ease the person’s anguish or make it more tolerable” (Kanov et al., 2004, p. 814).

In addition to addressing suffering in others, compassion helps leaders develop patience towards others who are negative towards them and helps leaders see their own shortcomings. Kopelman and Mahalingam (2014), studying how to “negotiate emotions mindfully” (p. 32), found that addressing others’ suffering with compassion, helps leaders develop patience towards others who are negative towards them and helps leaders see their own shortcomings. In honestly seeing their own shortcomings, leaders are able to manage their emotions versus being driven by their emotions. From a leadership perspective, this ability to manage one’s emotions is needed to ensure the correct focus is applied to needs within the organization, both subordinate and mission needs.

Additionally, exhibiting compassion has a reciprocal affect upon leaders. As leaders experience compassion through coaching and developing others (helping others to grow, self actualize, and flourish), they experience positive effects that enable their own growth and sustainability (Boyatzis, Smith, & Blaize, 2006).

**Key insights about caring and compassion.** Several ideas from the literature on care and compassion can be applied to caring leadership in this dissertation:

- The perspective here is that caring leadership simultaneously focuses on the flourishing of subordinates and the success of the mission. This approach pursues the success of both while minimizing the failure of both.
• In pursuing the flourishing of the subordinates and the success of the mission, the focus of the care-giver—as the leader—is not on himself or herself but on the recipient of the care.

• Virtuous leadership and POS can contribute together to organizational excellence in Air Force and non-Air Force organizations.

• Suffering is part of organizational life (Dutton et al., 2014). And the Air Force, being a military organization that sends people into combat, is no stranger to suffering. Whether the pain is experienced by the family of an airman killed in combat or the pain experienced due to a wound, suffering has the potential of being very real in airmen’s lives. Given that the need exists to help subordinates flourish and the need exists to help alleviate subordinates’ suffering exist at the same time, caring leadership and compassionate leadership are both needed as well.

**Caring Leadership and Subordinates**

The first focus addressed in this discussion is caring leadership’s focus on subordinates; caring leadership’s focus on the mission will be addressed in the following section. Caring leaders create caring relationships that support subordinates, encourage risk-taking, and forgive mistakes. Kouzes and Pozner (2012), based on their long-term practice and study of leadership development, argued that it was essential for leaders to show “personalized gratitude and show followers that they are valued” (pp. 318–319). In an extensive literature search of caring leaders, Gabriel (2015) pointed to the ever-present requirement for leaders to treat subordinates with “consideration and respect” (p. 324). Similarly, Caldwell and Dixon (2010) in their analysis, “Love, Forgiveness, and Trust: Critical Values of the Modern Leader,” emphasized the need for
leaders “to communicate so strongly (in word and deed) to their subordinates the value the leader sees in them that the subordinates see the same worth and potential in themselves” (p. 98).

Caring leaders are “present and visible” (Ciulla, 2009, p. 3; see also Gabriel, 2015). Being physically present with subordinates shows that the leader is not only present but also “supports the subordinates and is there for them” (Kouzes & Pozner, 2012, p. 319). Offering personalized attention is a visible and tangible way leaders connect with their followers, according to Gabriel (1997), who evocatively studied organizational employees’ direct encounters with those at the top of organizations, calling this “meeting God” (p. 315). Gabriel based this on a detailed interpretation of three detailed narratives by students who were on six-month industrial internships.

Caring leaders display a constant watchfulness over changing needs and aspirations in a way not unlike a watchful teacher or parent who is alert to the emotional needs of his or her students or children, offering recognition and validation. Caring leaders offer constructive but objective feedback and act as “toxic handlers” (Frost & Robinson, 1999, p. 96), protecting their followers from excess anxieties. Frost and Robinson (1999) discussed managers who voluntarily shoulder the sadness, frustration, bitterness and anger of others so that high-quality work continues to get done. Caring leaders are willing to go beyond the call of duty in dispatching their responsibilities, “to go the extra mile to meet subordinates’ needs and ensure that they flourish” (Gabriel, 2015, p. 316).

Gabriel (2008), in a literature review of caring leadership in the service industry, concluded that caring leaders fight to defend those for whom they care, rather than opt for easy and convenient compromises. Caring means taking “responsibilities for others and being prepared to take personal risks in discharging such responsibilities” (Gabriel, 2015, p. 325).
Authentic caring leaders empathize with their subordinates according to Goffee and Jones (2000) who conducted an exhaustive review of influential theories on leadership, titled “Why Should Anyone be Led by You?” They summarized four unexpected qualities of truly great leaders: revealing their weaknesses; relying heavily on intuition to gauge appropriate timing and course of their actions; managing employees with "tough empathy” (p. 62); and capitalizing on employees’ differences. Goffee and Jones further concluded that caring leaders also ensure their subordinates have the tools and resources and support they need to achieve their best.

Only a small number of articles were found that address the impacts of caring on subordinates. Kahn’s case study (1993) of job burnout among human services workers and caregiving relationships (between leadership and workers) illustrated many of the above statements regarding caring actions. Kahn focused on “internal networks of caregiving relationships” (p. 539) between organizational leadership and those of service workers, addressed caregiving in organizations, and framed “caregiving as an emotional act, involving the transfer of emotions through exchanges of resources, time, information, counseling and/or services” (p. 543). He documented eight behavioral dimensions, which are also supported in literature: accessibility, inquiry, attention, validation, empathy, support, and compassion, and consistency. For each dimension, Kahn (1993) identified examples of caring behaviors and impacts upon the care-receiver. Selected examples of Kahn’s behavioral dimensions and corresponding impacts follow.

Kahn (1993) characterizes the accessibility dimension as “staying in the other’s vicinity; staying with the other person . . . not allow[ing] external interruption” (p. 546), which in turn “allows the caregiving relationship to commence” (p. 546). The validation dimension “communicates positive regard, respect, and appreciation” (p. 546), thereby communicating to
others the sense of being valued, valuable, and worthy of being cared for and appreciated” (p. 546). The compassion dimension “shows emotional presence by displaying warmth, affection, and kindness [and makes] others feel . . . held by and within by the caregiver’s affection, and loved” (p. 546). Finally, the consistency dimension “provides an ongoing steady stream of resources and physical/emotional/cognitive presence for the other” (p. 546), which in turn build trust with the other that “his or her own needs will be met in steady, predictable ways” (p. 546).

Kahn (1993) commented that the lack of caregiving by organizational leadership contributes to a loss of meaning, which an “administrator described as feeling ‘like I’m not doing anything worthwhile’” (p. 545). A social worker described it as feeling underappreciated when no one asks how things are or comments on how well she was doing the job (p. 545). Kahn presented five patterns of caregiving that are manifested in organizations: “Flow . . . caregiving flowing from agency superiors to subordinates during role-related interactions (p. 547); “Reverse flow . . . subordinates giving unreciprocated care to superiors” (p. 549); “Fragmented . . . cycling of caregiving between a superior and subordinate who simultaneously replenish one another while withholding care from others for whom they are responsible” (p. 550); “Self-contained . . . characterized by the temporary retreat of subsystem members into mutual caregiving that occurs outside the hierarchical structure” (p. 552); and “Barren . . . characterized by a mutual lack of caregiving between hierarchal supervisors and subordinates” (p. 555). These behaviors occur because others have been abandoned by those who can but do not provide caregiving.

Kahn (1993) concluded by stating that, to subordinates, “the organization is represented by their supervisors” (p. 561). As these supervisors give or withhold care, so does the
organization, according to the perceptions of the subordinates. Subordinates feel that either the organization cares about them or does not care about them based upon their supervisors’ actions.

In another article that addresses caring behavior, Kroth and Keeler (2009) present their theoretical “Recursive Model of Manager-Employee Caring,” (p. 506) using nursing, education, and management perspectives to model managerial caring. Via a literature review, they defined managerial caring as a process in which a “manager exhibits inviting, advances, capacitizing, and connecting behaviors toward an employee(s)” (p. 521). Employer and employee engage in a “reciprocal/recursive process” (p. 521). Kroth and Keeler (2009) describe four caring themes:

- **Recursiveness**: the caring process that “ebbs and flows” (p. 517) between the care-giver and the care-receiver;

- **Invites**: the leader is receptive to and fully available to employees. Associated manager behaviors include: being emotionally accessible; paying attention; showing interest in the employee; accepting the employee; remaining open to ideas, possibilities (is open minded); empathizing;

- **Advances**: has a desire to help the employees succeed. Associated manager behaviors include putting employee plans and goals ahead of one’s own; advocating for the employee; being committed to employee success; protecting employees; seeking opportunities for advancing employees;

- **Capacitizes**: sees individual potential in each employee/subordinate and helps employees grow and learn. Associated manager behaviors include informing employees; facilitating problem solving; giving generative feedback; encouraging employees; believing in employees; teaching and mentoring employees and
developing relationships of mutual trust and obligation (Kroth & Keeler, pp. 516–523).

The authors also stated that managerial caring behaviors contribute “to desired employee outcomes such as productivity, retention, organizational citizenship behavior, and job satisfaction” (Kroth & Keeler, 2009, p. 523).

Van der Vyver et al. (2014) assessed care given by school leaders (principals) to primary school teachers. Their Caring School Leadership Questionnaire (CSLQ) used determinants of care gathered from “literature on education management and leadership, caring models, and instruments related to caring and service leadership” (p. 2). They separated the determinants into three groups: “psychological determinants, work/place/organizational determinants, and management determinants” (p. 2). Selected examples of each determinant are: psychological determinants—interest in a person by showing sympathy or empathy; attention to the person; compassion; respect, and acceptance of others; workplace/organizational determinants: safe working environment; conduct and behavior of the leader; provision of resources; and creating a caring environment; and management determinants: trust; empowerment; accessibility; commitment; leader effectiveness; consistency; staff development; and transformative influence.

This article presents the case for validating the CSLQ. More importantly to this dissertation, it identifies caring leadership behaviors in a school setting and provides a questionnaire that assists in measuring caring abilities in school leaders. These caring leadership behaviors, as identified by van der Vyver et al. (2014), potentially shed light on caring leadership behaviors in the Air Force; but van der Vyver (2014) did not identify how subordinates respond to these behaviors, a main focus in the research taken by this dissertation.
Edge, Descours, and Frayman’s (2016) research examined how GenX education leaders (principals) and their teachers conceptualize and articulate leaders’ roles in caring for their teachers. Leadership actions are described as: leaders supporting and understanding; leader approachability; leader knowledge of teacher personal lives; and teacher modeling of balance between work and life. Though participants were from three different locations—London, New York and Toronto—the authors found that teachers’ expectations did not differ in their beliefs in leaders’ duty, ability, and commitment to care for teachers. A high level of importance was placed on leaders’ ability and willingness to be supportive, understanding, and approachable. “Teachers also expect leaders to be role models for and to advocate for good work/life balance” (Edge et al., 2016, p. 1). The prioritization of people, support, being human, and striving for balance between work and life remained central. Edge et al., (2016) further said: “teachers’ motivation and wellbeing are linked to leaders’ support of work/life balance and acknowledging that teachers have lives outside of school” (p. 7).

Caring about and for subordinates contributes to a two-way trust between the leader and subordinates. Caring towards subordinates creates higher commitment, greater synergy, increased creativity, and improved quality (Caldwell & Dixon, 2010). Leaders who are committed to the welfare of others build trust, commitment, and meaning for their followers (Caldwell & Dixon, 2010). Caring (and other aspects of character) and competency contribute to a leader’s ability to lead an organization toward accomplishing its objectives (Hackett & Wang, 2012; Sweeney et al., 2009) Caring leaders are likely to be viewed as moral leaders who “command trust, affection, and respect” (Gabriel, 2015, p. 330).
In addition to building trust, caring leadership also impacts other aspects of leader-subordinates’ relationships. Teven and Gorham (1998) studied the behaviors of teachers perceived by undergraduate students as conveying caring and non-caring towards them:

Students of teachers who are judged as caring about their students evaluate those teachers more positively, report greater affect for the teachers and the course materials, and report higher levels of cognitive learning than do students of teachers who were not perceived as caring about their students. (p. 295)

Showing subordinates that they are cared for and valued motivated subordinates to work harder for the company (Kouzes & Pozner, 2012). Zauderer (2006), drawing on the biographies of “two extraordinary coaches, Mike Krzyzewski of Duke University and Pat Summit of the University of Tennessee” (p. 20), found that even student-athletes express their appreciation by “bringing passion to the basketball court when they come to understand that their coach cares about every aspect of their development” (p. 22).

Key insights on caring leadership and subordinates. Several ideas can be drawn from the preceding literature discussion and can potentially be applied to caring leadership relative to the Air Force:

- Caring leadership is not motivated by making the leader look good so he or she can get promoted; caring leadership is motivated by wanting to see the subordinates flourish (Hamington, 2004; Noddings, 1984).

- Caring leadership steps out of its personal space and meets subordinates where they are, regardless of rank, and considers the subordinates’ point of view and needs (Ciulla, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 20123; Noddings 1984, 2013).

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3 Kouzes and Pozner’s (2012) book originated with research on the practices of individuals when they were functioning at their personal best as leaders. The authors then moved to conduct research into the “principles and practices that support the basic human need to be appreciated for who we are and what we do” (p. xii, xiii).
• Whether or not subordinates perceive that the organization cares for them is largely dependent upon how the subordinates’ first level and second level bosses care about those subordinates (Kahn, 1993).

• Subordinates need leaders who come to them where they are (Ciulla 2009; Gabriel, 1997, 2015; Kouzes & Pozner, 2012), who are willing to take risks and protect them from more senior leaders who use their rank and position inappropriately (Gabriel 2008, 2015), and who ensure subordinates have the tools they need to accomplish the risky mission they have been asked to pursue (Goffee & Jones, 2000).

• Subordinates need tangible evidence that the leader is worthy of their trust.

Caring Leadership and the Mission

The second focus addressed here is caring leadership’s focus on the mission. Caring leaders respect and value the mission and its accomplishment and give willingly and generously of their time, advice, recognition and support towards the mission’s success. They demonstrate that they are genuinely concerned for the realization of a mission or a project. In fact, “caring leaders can be as passionately committed to organizational excellence just as other types of leaders” (Caldwell & Dixon, 2010, p. 98).

Blanchard (2010), in Leading at a Higher Level, documented his research and professional experience to “help individuals and organizations lead at a higher level” (p. xviii). He pointed out that the leader who cares about and for the mission moves the subordinates to serve the mission not the leader. First, the leader’s actions need to be congruent with the organization’s mission (or objectives or vision). Second, the leader demonstrates he or she cares about and for the mission by supporting the subordinates as they pursue the mission. The leader removes barriers, ensures organization business practices and systems help subordinates do their
job rather than hindering them from doing their jobs. Third, the leader holds all accountable to consistently work toward accomplishing the mission. When subordinates see the leader living out the mission in these ways, they will know the leader is serious and will deepen their understanding and commitment to the mission and organization.

Quinn and Thakor (2014) discussed their research findings regarding organizational performance and the impact “imbuing organizations with a higher purpose” (p. 100) has upon performance. Helping subordinates grasp their individual roles as being part of something much bigger than their individual activities, is seen as a key aspect of a leader caring about the mission. The leader conveys the mission in such a way that a bigger goal is to be achieved and each subordinate has a vital role to play in the bigger goal. Seeing the mission in this manner and the role each individual plays positively affects the behavior of the subordinates. This produces increased meaning and subordinates valuing intrinsic rewards, living in trust, and experiencing high collaboration, and work begins to mean more to subordinates.

Blustein (1991) provided good insight into this type of caring that focuses on a principle (or a project) and in this case, the mission. He pointed out that when a person cares in this manner, they identify in some way with the project; the person invests in the project; the person promulgates the project; and the person takes an active interest in the successful accomplishment of the project. This type of person is committed to the success of the project or the mission. This person’s “actions are clearly in accordance with his or her commitments and demonstrate that commitment” (p. 95).

A caring leader has the solemn duty to set the example, live-out the organization values, and keep commitments. These authentic, heart-driven actions demonstrate the leader cares about and for the unit’s mission (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).
Goffee and Jones (2000) stated that caring leaders ensure their subordinates have the tools, resources, and support they need to achieve their best as they pursue achieving their mission. Taylor, Ladkin, and Statler (2015) shed light on how management (and leadership) demonstrate care and provide similar support. They considered management as a craft versus the ideal of management as a value-neutral science. Their research identified three caring orientations: caring for materials, caring for process, and caring for end-users, all of which are included in caring for a mission. In caring for the mission, the leader values and respects the importance of the resources needed to accomplish the mission, the steps, plan, or process necessary to accomplish the mission, and the end-users or customers who are the recipients of the successful mission.

In regards to caring for materials, Taylor et al. (2015) found that a manager works with materials to create value added output. The manager sees and understands the system in which he or she works. This includes understanding the limitations and boundaries of both physical and human resources. In fact, “the manager goes beyond merely understanding these resources and their limitations; managers care about their resources, working with them to produce lasting excellence” (p. 580).

Regarding caring for process, the craft manager is committed to pursuing quality, and the process of creating a quality product requires personal attention and care (Taylor et al., 2015). Because craft managers are “committed to the quality of their work, they will focus on the details of their craft, motivated by a desire to do it right” (Taylor et al., 2015, p. 580).

Regarding caring for end-users, Taylor et al. (2015) point out that the craft manager (or caregiver) must keep the end-user in mind. The quality of the craft product is judged relative to how it meets the needs of the end-user. Furthermore, since compromises will be struck when
creating a product that fulfills both aesthetic goals and functional needs, it is through care that trade-offs are made that “transform constraints into creative solutions for the end user” (p. 581).

**Key insights about caring leadership and the mission.** Several main ideas about caring leadership and the mission were found useful for this dissertation.

- The leader’s actions should be in congruence with the organization’s mission, objectives, or vision (Blanchard, 2010).
- The leader demonstrates he or she cares about and for the mission by supporting the subordinates as they pursue the mission (Blanchard, 2010).
- The leader holds all accountable to consistently work toward accomplishing the mission (Blanchard, 2010).
- Leaders help subordinates grasp their individual roles as being part of something much bigger than their individual activities (Blustein, 1991).
- A leader’s actions demonstrate he or she is committed to the mission: a leader cares and focuses on the mission; identifies in some way with the mission, invests in the mission, promulgates the mission, and takes an active interest in the successful accomplishment of the project (Blustein, 1991).
- The leader respects and values the resources needed to accomplish the mission, the plan to accomplish the mission, and the end-user of the accomplished mission (Taylor et al., 2015).

**Caring Leadership Relative to Other Leadership Types**

The relationship between caring leadership and other leadership types is depicted in Figure 2.2. It shows the commonality caring leadership shares with Transformational Leadership, Authentic Leadership, Relational Leadership, and Servant Leadership.
From a caring leadership perspective, Mayeroff (1971) stresses the necessity of knowing the needs of the subordinates and points out that the care-receiver is his focus, and the growth of this person “is the center of his attention” (p. 19). Bass and Riggio’s (2006) comprehensive review on theory and research regarding transformational leadership uses similar language and speaks to leaders “paying special attention to individual followers needs . . . [and] caring about the individuals’ development” (p. 7).

From a caring leadership perspective, Blustein (1991) said that “objects of caring can be diverse, including people, communities and traditions, ideas and ideals, material objects, and personal objects” (p. 145). Caring about these objects by the care-giver (the leader) includes the desire and willingness to act for their good much like acting for the good of (or caring about and for) the mission. Likewise, transformational leadership’s idealized influence uses similar language and speaks to the leader creating a collective sense of mission within the subordinates (Bass & Riggio, 2006).
From a caring leadership perspective, people who display true, altruistic caring leadership are genuinely concerned for and committed to the individual people they touch without regard of personal gain (Bennis & Goldsmith, 2013). Bennis and Goldsmith’s (2013) workbook, Learning to Lead, was written to encourage leaders to develop six leadership competencies that they identified and learned of through their research, experiences, and experts in leadership (p. xxii).

This selfless, disinterested care is given for the benefit of the recipient and is not aimed at giving an advantage to the care-giver (Blustein, 1991). Authentic leadership uses similar language characterized by understanding followers in a deeper more genuine and human manner without regard to the leader’s personal benefit, which in turn produces a more effective caring leader (Eriksen, 2009). Authentic leadership enables caring leadership.

From a caring leadership perspective and in the caring leader’s relationship with his or her subordinates, he or she has a sense of responsibility towards those subordinates—to be responsive, responsible, and accountable for everyday interactions. These interactions, activities within relationship, are responses to seeing needs and demonstrating how the leader cares for subordinates (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984). Relational leadership uses language similar to caring leadership’s. Relational leadership is at the heart of the basic meaning of caring and caring leadership. Relational leadership characterizes leaders and their relationship with their subordinates and how they operate together (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Cunliffe & Eriksen, (2011) had similar findings in a paper extending contemporary perspectives on relational leadership theory by framing leadership “as embedded in the everyday relationally-responsive dialogical practices of leaders” (p. 1425). Relational leadership enables caring leadership.

The overlap between caring leadership and servant leadership is very evident. The servant leadership model for leadership began with Robert Greenleaf (1970) in Servant...
Leadership. According to Greenleaf, servant leadership originates with “the natural feeling that one wants to serve” (p. 13). Greenleaf (1970) defines a servant leader by stating:

The servant-leader is servant first . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions . . . The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 15)

Greenleaf (1976), in The Institution as a Servant, further states his thesis: “caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is built” (p. 9). In this follow-up essay, he discussed the caring role large institutions play in building a better society.

Caring behavior towards subordinates or other people for their betterment, is a focus of caring leadership (Blustein, 1991; Gabriel, 2015; Gilligan, 1982; Mayeroff, 1971; Noddings, 1984, 2013). Similarly, servant leadership is strongly based in ethical and caring behavior, as concluded by Spears (2010) on the basis of professional experience and a literature review of “ten characteristics of the servant leader” (p. 25). Caring is the vehicle the servant leader uses to meet the needs of subordinates (van der Vyver et al., 2014).

Given the presence of relationship and the need for authenticity in caring leadership, caring leadership’s success is directly dependent upon the contributions of relational leadership and authentic leadership. Caring toward people and the mission works to enable transformational leadership and servant leadership to operate successfully. Caring is at the heart of caring leadership (Gabriel, 2015) and interacts with these four models of leadership.
Literature on Caring Leadership in the Air Force and the Army

The above literature review addresses caring leadership primarily in non-military environments, such as education, management, and nursing. Attention will now turn to literature that addresses caring leadership in the Air Force. Additionally, because literature on this subject is somewhat limited, a literature review of caring leadership in the U.S. Army will be presented. In many cases in literature, the Army is seen as being synonymous with the military, and the Air Force is considered a sub-culture within the military (Wong, Bliese, & McGurk, 2003). Therefore, literature addressing caring leadership in the Army will be presented to gain potential insight into caring leadership within the military in general and within the Air Force in particular.

Though the researcher could not find empirical studies regarding caring leadership in the U.S. Army, the Army takes a definitive, actionable approach to leadership. The Army said of itself: "We are about leadership; it is our stock in trade, and it is what makes us different” (U.S. Army, 1999, p. 7). Caring leadership is part of the very fabric of the U.S. Army (Headquarters Department of the Army, 2015).

[The Army] recognizes that stewardship, an essential characteristic of trust between the Army and the American people, is the responsibility of Army Professionals to strengthen the Army as a profession and to care for the people and resources entrusted to us by the American people. Stewardship provides for the long-term readiness and resilience of our people and organizations. (p. vii)

Furthermore, Headquarters Department of the Army (2012), in its publication, ARDP 6-22, Army Leadership, states "taking care of soldiers ensures they are prepared for whatever challenges lie ahead” (p. 2-2). Headquarters Department of the Army (2015), in its field manual FM 6-22, Leader Development, asserts the need for using sound judgment and critical thinking to accomplish missions. The goal is to develop Army leaders who clearly provide purpose, direction, motivation, and vision to their teams and subordinates while executing missions to support their commander’s intent. Striking a balance between pursuing the welfare of
subordinates and successfully accomplishing the mission is a critical principle in Army leadership.

Headquarters Department of the Army (2015) frequently mentioned caring for its soldiers, their development, and the families of soldiers. The Army-wide mentoring program uses language of caring for “its people and their development” (p. 3-20). Further relevant statements include that “Army leaders must be able to train, lead, and care for soldiers” (p. 4-7); Army leaders are told to “foster teamwork and express care for individuals” (p. 6-7). An Army competency to be developed is “demonstrating care for follower well-being” (p. 7-4). Taking care of followers “contributes to closer team relationships” (p. 7-9). “Leaders must be able to keep an eye on the mission while being cognizant of and caring for their soldiers” (p. 7-9).

Headquarters Department of the Army (2015) identifies the following list of actions Army leaders use to care for soldiers:

- Ensure subordinates and their families’ health, welfare, and development are provided for;
- Monitor morale and encourage honest feedback;
- Set a personal example for colleagues;
- Understand and nurture individual subordinates’ intrinsic motivators;
- Tell a subordinate to go home when they have been working long hours;
- And give subordinates time off during the workday to take care of family matters. (p. 7-35)

Army leadership is also directed to “assess [the soldiers’] developmental needs” (Headquarters Department of the Army, 2015, p. 7-46) through regular counseling and evaluation that demonstrates that leaders care about their soldiers’ performance and development.

In moving from leadership directives, as contained in Headquarters Department of the Army (2015) FM 6-22, to the practice of leadership, Woodruff (2005), an Army major and an instructor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the U. S. Military Academy, talked about how caring leadership in the Army focuses on a soldier’s needs—such as family—so the soldier can focus on accomplishing the mission and not be distracted by those
needs. He wrote: “Caring leadership is the key. Our leaders are expected to be caring, compassionate, and accommodating of soldiers and their families . . . you must focus on caring, individualized leadership” (Woodruff, 2005, p. 34).

Why?

The Army must care deeply for its subordinates, because the Army asks them to risk their lives and subordinate their own-well-being to the unit’s, entrusting their safety and welfare to their leaders and peers…it is because we ask so much that leaders must also care so much. (Woodruff, 2015, p. 34)

Competently caring for families goes a long way to demonstrate genuine caring.

Woodruff (2005) pointed out that a caring leader must do the following:

1. consider families as part of the organization versus a distraction from it;
2. seek to identify new ways to increase spousal satisfaction with military life;
3. train subordinate leaders in family support, model these practices, and evaluate their success; allow families as much control over their situation and time as possible;
4. provide a predictable schedule so families can schedule/accommodate activities, planned and unplanned;
5. not waste soldiers’ time; listen to families’ problems; take a real interest in families’ wellbeing.
6. respect soldiers and their families; target and provide special attention to high-risk families such as young families, single parents, and families new to the military;
7. provide unit activities that inform soldiers and spouses about family programs in the unit and elsewhere;
8. recognize when extra time at work may actually degrade performance if it results in excessive time away from families;
9. communicate with spouses and act as advocate for families;
10. provide quality sponsorship to new soldiers and allow new soldiers time to get their families settled (pp. 35–36).

Crandall (2005), a captain and an instructor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the U. S. Military Academy, wrote:

The sense of trust and respect that will cause a group of soldiers to risk their lives for their team, to follow orders in the face of danger, to put the mission first when the commander asks them to, is born not from rank: bars, oak leaf, or stars on a shirt collar, rather, it proceeds from the type of genuine caring, competence, and integrity that inspires complete and total commitment. (p.19)
Crandall (2005) continues by stating “the currency of caring drives a values-based capitalism that reaches beyond monetary profits and inspires action based upon an identification with a leader or an organization and its values” (p. 21). Pfaff (1998) an Army Captain and philosopher, concurred with Crandall, saying:

Soldiers need to trust that their leader cares about them and will do all they can to ensure their safety in life-threatening situations. If the soldier does not feel that the leader is genuinely looking out for him/her, then the soldier’s concern for self-preservation may replace his or her commitment to accomplishing the mission. (Pfaff, 1998, p. 13)

Sweeney et al.’s (2009) findings regarding trust have direct application to the military in general and the Air Force in particular. Based upon their two studies of an interdependence model of trust development and the links between trust and influence in the extreme environment of combat, and a non-combat replication, they wrote:

Trust enhances leader and organizational performance because it provides both group members and leaders a sense of safety, which satisfies their basic need for security in the organization. When people feel secure—because they trust that leaders and the organization will protect their welfare—they can focus their energies on meeting higher order needs, such as forming strong and cohesive relationships (i.e., belongingness), mastering duties and achieving organizational objectives to gain recognition from others and a greater sense of self-efficacy (i.e., esteem), learning new knowledge and skills to prepare for future assignments (i.e., cognitive), and pursuing activities that promote growth and develop innate potential. (Sweeney et al., 2009, pp. 259–260)

In short, the trust between military, subordinates and their leaders (whether in the Army or in the Air Force) builds the subordinates’ sense of security and safety and frees subordinates to go into life threatening situations with only one focus in mind: accomplish the task and come home safely.

According to the U. S. Air Force, each Airman has the “obligation to care for, teach, and lead others” (Department of the Air Force, 2014a, p. 12). Taking care of fellow airmen is visualized and embodied in the wingman concept: airmen taking care of airmen. When flying in formation, a pilot’s wingman is off to the side or located behind and is watching the pilot’s side
or back. Having situational awareness of an entire circular sphere around a formation is difficult to do. The formation must be aware of an approaching enemy aircraft that could come from any direction. Therefore, pilots rely on other pilots, their wingmen, who are flying behind or beside to see things for each other…hence the name wingman concept: airmen helping airmen.

The Air Force is the airborne component of the Department of Defense, and its mission of flying, fighting, and winning is at the heart of Air Force culture (Department of the Air Force, 2014a). The wingman concept is part of the Air Force culture and reminds all airmen to be wingmen to other airmen, “to support each other, in all situations, both on- and off-duty” (Department of the Air Force, 2009, p. 10), and thus always safeguard and take care of the person in front—as in “I got your back.” This credo teaches that the person in front never lets his or her wingman wander into a dangerous situation, either professionally or personally (Department of the Air Force, 2014a). Taking care of people is an Air Force “institutional sub-competency under the institutional competency of leading people” (Department of the Air Force, 2009, p. 23). General duties of non-commissioned officers (NCOs) include “taking an active leadership and supervisory role by staying involved with subordinates on a daily basis and to use their experiences and knowledge to mentor others” (Department of the Air Force, 2009, p. 11). Additionally, the Air Force requires “all members with dependents family members to have family care arrangements that reasonably cover all situations” (Department of the Air Force, 2014c, p. 3).

Regarding accomplishing the mission, the Department of the Air Force (2014a) states that “the mission must be accomplished, even at great risk and personal sacrifice” (p. 5). That sacrifice could mean giving up one’s life for the accomplishment of the mission. Furthermore, the Department of the Air Force (2014a) states that airmen are always on duty and if ordered,
must “report for duty at any hour, at any location and will remain as long as necessary to get the job done” (p. 5). Clearly, accomplishing the mission in extremely important to the Air Force.

Furthermore, Air Force commanders are responsible to “support the professional and personal development of subordinates.” They have “the unique authority and responsibility to engage in the lives of their subordinates, where appropriate, to improve quality of life, promote unit morale, and ensure all members are treated with dignity and respect” (Department of the Air Force, 2014b, p. 3).

Unfortunately, no literature was found that discussed specific caring leadership actions by Air Force leaders, or that addressed the flourishing of subordinates and the successful accomplishment of the mission. And, no literature was found that documented how subordinates respond to this type of caring leadership. The literature review identified studies regarding caring focused on management, educational, and healthcare organizations, all safe professions relative to the military. No literature was found that explored caring leadership within an organization that says “the mission must be accomplished, even at great risk and personal sacrifice” (Department of the Air Force, 2014a, p. 5) and within one that requires its people to “report for duty at any hour and at any location” (Department of the Air Force, 2014a, p. 5). This lack of literature drives the research in this dissertation.

**Key insights on caring within Air Force and Army leadership.** The main ideas, useful to this study, arising from this review of caring leadership in the Air Force and the Army were:

- A number of non-empirical sources identified caring leadership and its value to the Army.
• Given the relationship between the Army and the Air Force, one might conclude that the same caring actions demonstrated by the Army could have equal value in the Air Force.

• The lack of literature on caring leadership within the Air Force drives the research in this dissertation.

Summary and Future Research

Though little literature specifically focusing on caring leadership in the Air Force was found, information was located that provides pertinent insight into caring leadership in general. That information deals with:

• The basic subject of caring is addressed in the literature. Much has been written about caring and caring relationship between people. Some has been written about the caring in regards to principles, projects, and ideals or the mission. Some literature spoke of caring for both people and caring for principles, projects, if they occurred independently of each other. No literature was found that specifically addressed both topics of caring occurring simultaneously in the same environment.

• How caring about and caring for others works together to provide care.

• Caring leadership that focuses on the flourishing of subordinates and on the success of the mission works to accomplish both, simultaneously. This type of caring leadership meets Aristotle’s criteria to be a virtue.

• The presence of caring in Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership.

• The presence of relationship and authenticity in caring leadership.

• Leader to subordinate caring motivates the subordinate to be more satisfied and to perform at a higher level.
• Caring leadership is valuable to the Army.

This information sheds some light on caring leadership that could pertain to caring leadership in Air Force. However, to repeat, no source specifically addressed Air Force caring leadership from the subordinates’ perspective, specifically the actions that demonstrate caring leadership to subordinates and the subordinates’ subsequent responses. This literature is insufficient to answer my research questions regarding caring leadership in the Air Force for the following reasons:

• The Department of the Air Force (2014a) states that “the mission must be accomplished, even at great risk and personal sacrifice” (p. 5). That sacrifice could mean giving up one’s life for the accomplishment of the mission. Furthermore, the Department of the Air Force states that airmen are always on duty and if ordered, airmen “will report for duty at any hour, at any location and will remain as long as necessary to get the job done” (p. 5). Presumably, civilian professions (e.g., nursing, education, and management) do not require this level of sacrifice and dedication to mission. Therefore, the researcher believes data regarding caring leadership gleaned from non-Air Force retirees is less applicable than data collected from Air Force retirees.

• A very small number of empirical studies investigated leaders’ caring behaviors and subordinates’ responses. Descriptions of caring leadership in the Air Force were not identified. Given the differences in context between the Air Force (and the military in general) and civilian professions (nursing, education, and management), descriptors of caring leadership and responses to caring leadership in the Air Force may differ from caring leadership descriptors and responses in civilian professions.
• No literature was found that addressed both caring for people (or subordinates) and the mission simultaneously.

Therefore, to understand caring leadership within the Air Force, research was conducted to answer the following two overarching questions:

• How do Air Force retirees describe caring leadership in the Air Force as it relates to caring about and for subordinates and for the mission?

• When Air Force retirees experienced this type of caring leadership, how did they respond?

Chapter III follows, detailing the research methodology used in this dissertation to address these two questions.
Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter II, the literature review, identified many illuminating facets of caring leadership: the philosophy of care and caring (Blustein, 1991; Gilligan, 1982; Mayeroff, 1965, 1971; Noddings, 1984, 2013), insights into who caring leaders are (Aristotle, 2009; Caldwell, 2010; Pfeffer, 1994), what caring leaders do to demonstrate care (Caldwell & Dixon, 2010; Ciulla, 2009; Gabriel, 2015; Kouzes & Pozner, 2012), and some insights into the value of caring leadership in the military (Headquarters Department of the Army, 2012, 2015). The literature related to caring leadership provides potential insight into caring leadership as experienced in the Air Force, but it does not characterize caring leadership as defined by Air Force retirees themselves, and it does not examine how Air Force retirees respond to caring leadership.

Research Objective and Questions

This dissertation’s overall objective is to describe the practices of caring leadership as experienced by Air Force retirees and to describe the behavioral responses they recall having to these practices. A number of sources reviewed caring and caring behavior, but the contexts were primarily education, nursing, and management environments. West Point instructors and the Army Field Manual provided some insight into caring leadership behavior and its value within the Army, but no source characterized caring leadership in the military in general or the Air Force in particular, and no source measured the subordinates’ reported responses to caring leadership. Therefore, this study addresses the following two overarching questions:

- How do Air Force retirees describe caring leadership in the Air Force as it relates to caring about and for the subordinates and for the mission?
- When Air Force retirees experienced caring leadership, how did they respond?
The specific research questions related to this focus are:

- Research Question 1. From Air Force subordinates’ perspectives, what actions taken by a leader demonstrate to subordinates that the leader cares for those subordinates?
- Research Question 2. How do Air Force subordinates describe their responses to a leader who demonstrates that he or she cares for their subordinates in this manner?
- Research Question 3. From Air Force subordinates’ perspectives, what actions taken by a leader demonstrate to subordinates that the leader cares for the unit’s mission?
- Research Question 4. How do Air Force subordinates describe their responses to a leader who demonstrates he or she cares for the unit’s mission in this manner?
- Research Question 5. How do caring leadership actions toward Air Force subordinates correlate with subordinate responses?
- Research Question 6. How do subgroups of Air Force subordinates, such as men and women and commissioned and non-commissioned officers, differ in terms of how they describe caring leadership behaviors and their responses to caring leadership?

The research focused on military retirees only. Active duty military members are members of the Air Force institution; the researcher did not want to seek permission of the institution. Because retirees have much more experience to draw upon than many active duty members, only retirees were included in the research. Interviews and the survey focused on subordinates to gain their views from a subordinate role, not from a leader role: experiences as receivers of caring actions, witnesses of caring actions toward the mission, and responses to bosses who displayed caring actions. The research focused on the non-combat environment; combat situations were not included in the study.
Research Approach

Though the literature discusses examples of caring leadership behavior across a variety of contexts, it does not provide a direct description of caring leadership as seen by Air Force retirees, nor does it describe how Air Force retirees responded to caring leadership while on active duty. Therefore, an exploratory Phase 1 (qualitative) stage was conducted that consisted of conversational semi-structured interviews to learn from a group of Air Force retirees how they characterize caring leadership and how they recall responding to caring leadership when they were on active duty. Phase 2 (quantitative) followed to test generalizability and comparative analyses. Phase 2 consisted of survey research, designing questions and Likert scale type responses that assess caring leadership. The survey was developed through use of Phase 1 interviews to determine if the information gained in Phase 1 could be generalized across a larger group of Air Force retirees. Additionally, comparative analyses of the survey findings were conducted to gain deeper insight into the survey results.

**Epistemological foundation of the research approach.** The two overarching questions mentioned above drove the selection of the mixed-methods research approach (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil, & Way, 2008). An exploratory sequential mixed methods (QUAL → QUAN) research approach, predicated on a pragmatic philosophy (Creswell, 2014), was chosen as the research method to address the core questions and to accomplish the overall objective.

Creswell (2014) stated that the philosophical standpoint contributes to shaping the approach to conducting research. This dissertation’s research design approach was shaped by the philosophy of pragmatism. Creswell (2014) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) provide characteristics of pragmatism:
• Pragmatists are not committed to a specific, single approach for conducting research. Pragmatists seek the best way(s) to determine truth.

• Researchers can choose the best type(s) of research to answer research question(s).

• Pragmatists do not see the world in absolute terms.

• Pragmatism is real-world practice oriented.

• Pragmatism includes a focus on action.

The two overarching questions of this work—how do Air Force retirees describe caring leadership as it relates to caring about and for the subordinates and for the mission? And, when Air Force retirees experienced caring leadership, how did they respond? — lend themselves to qualitative and quantitative analyses, respectively. Historically, some theorists suggested that qualitative and quantitative research approaches are incompatible due to the fundamental differences in their underlying paradigms (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). However, Brewer and Hunter (2006), in arguing for pragmatism and the compatibility between qualitative and quantitative research methods, took the position that different research methods with different questions and answers might provide a more integrated solution to a specific problem. A mixed methodologies approach is valuable because it combines qualitative and quantitative methods into a combined research approach to social research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

This dissertation is dependent upon Air Force retirees’ descriptions of caring leadership and descriptions of responses to caring leadership. An emphasis is placed on real-world caring leadership practices and the subsequent subordinate responses; focusing on practices is also a characteristic of pragmatism (Creswell, 2014; Yoshikawa et al., 2008). Therefore, pragmatism informed both the research method and practices that were employed in the pursuit of this dissertation and addressing its core questions.
Furthermore, because the description of caring leadership and the description of the responses to caring leadership in the Air Force are created by Air Force retirees and are based upon their experiences, a constructionist perspective influenced the qualitative questions in Phase 1 to capture maximum facets of meaning (Creswell, 2014). An interpretivist perspective drove the interpretation of the answers to the qualitative questions in Phase 1 (Blaikie, 2010; Creswell, 2014). My positionality as a retired Air Force member assisted me in being a “mediator of languages” (Blaikie, 2010, p. 51) to ensure interpretive consistency (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) of the qualitative data collected in Phase 1; but ultimately, it is the Air Force retirees’ concepts and meaning (Blaikie, 2010) that were captured. Therefore, a combined constructionist and interpretivist worldview informed specific practices of the research itself (Blaikie, 2010; Creswell, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Specific procedural details based upon the above epistemological positions follow.

**Research participants.** Air Force retirees are the participants in both the qualitative and the quantitative phases of this study. Air Force retirees, for purposes here, are those who have spent at least 20 years in the Air Force in their career, some up to 30 years. During a typical career, an Air Force member will likely have had over 25 bosses; this includes immediate bosses and those bosses’s immediate bosses, also known as second-level bosses. During an Air Force career, a member moved every two to four years on average. So, considering the frequency of moves by the member as well as the frequency of moves by the member’s immediate bosses and second-level bosses, a member could easily have had well over 25 bosses in a career. Having 25 bosses in a career afforded many opportunities to experience caring leadership.

In addition to this long duration of experience, an advantage of retirees as research participants is that they are private citizens. They are no longer members of the Air Force as an
organization, and the researcher was not required to obtain organizational permission for their participation in this work. This research does not include active duty Air Force members.

Table 3.1 depicts participants for the Phase 1 research, grouped by gender and by commission status.

Table 3.1

*Interviewee Demographic Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commissioned Officers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though some literature on caring is written by men from a male perspective (Blustein, 1991; Engster, 2007 Mayeroff, 1965, 1971), much of the foundational literature on caring has been written by women from a feminist perspective (Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2006; Noddings, 1984; Tronto, 1993). This study was designed to examine whether there are differences between the perspectives of male and female retirees regarding caring leadership in the Air Force. However, though females participated in the survey, low female participation in the survey prevented conducting robust comparative analyses between males and females in Phase 2.

Commission status in the Air Force carries with it certain roles and responsibilities. Commissioned officers’ rank ranges from Second Lieutenant to General. NCOs’ rank ranges from Staff Sergeant to Chief Master Sergeant. Roles, responsibilities, and location in an organization’s hierarchy differ between commissioned and NCOs. Commissioned officers lead Air Force organizations. NCOs advise commissioned officers and carry out the orders of the commissioned officers over them. This study examined whether the perspectives of
commissioned and NCO retirees differ in their recollection of caring leadership in the Air Force. Therefore, responses are analyzed by commission status.

A key question in the survey asked the participants to indicate the number of great bosses each participant had during his or her career. Responses were one, two, three, or four or more. These responses were grouped and labeled Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, and Group 4+, respectively. Response categories of Groups 1, 2, and 3 were combined into Group ≤3. Comparative analyses were conducted comparing Group ≤3 and Group 4+.

**Phase 1: Exploratory (Qualitative)**

Given that characterizations of caring leadership in the Air Force and subsequent subordinates’ responses to caring leadership were not found in literature, these had to be developed. This qualitative phase gathered an understanding from Air Force retirees regarding their thoughts and opinions about their experience with caring leadership while serving in the Air Force. This phase characterized caring leadership pertaining to subordinates and to the mission as experienced by Air Force retirees. The following steps were taken during this phase:

1. Collected data from interviews.
2. Analyzed and condensed the data down to specific leadership caring actions and responses to be used in developing a survey in Phase 2.

Phase 1 included interviewing 12 Air Force retirees to capture their thoughts on caring leadership. The goal was to interview an equal number of retirees in each quadrant in Table 3.1: three each of male and female commissioned officers, and three each of male and female NCOs. Identifying and securing the participation of the 12 interviewees was relatively easy. The researcher lives in an Air Force community and had a list of potential research participants much
larger than the targeted number of interviewees. Appendix A provides a copy of the letter used to invite the Phase 1 interviewees.

The objective of the interviews was to gather information regarding how subordinates describe caring leadership: how their leaders showed they cared for the subordinates as well as for the mission, and how the Air Force retirees responded to these caring leadership actions.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a conversational manner and contained a variety of question types: main questions, follow-up questions, and probing questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Though the goal of the Phase 1 interviews was to explore the prominence, relevance, and salience of caring leadership in the participants' characterizations of great leadership, the flow of the questions was designed to allow the interviewee to initiate the discussion on caring leadership in the Air Force. The literature review and conversations with other Air Force retirees had already informed the researcher regarding caring leadership actions and responses. The topic of caring leadership was only broached by the researcher via a probing question after it was obvious the interviewee was not going to initiate the topic; the researcher used a probing question in approximately half of the interviews. The guide used for the semi-structured interviews in Phase 1 is shown in Figure 3.1.
The interviews were recorded, and I took notes. Some interviews were conducted in person, and some were conducted on the telephone, depending on the interviewee’s location and preference. All interviewees were asked to sign an informed consent form for the interview; the informed consent form spoke only about the general topics of leadership and great bosses in the Air Force. It did not have language regarding caring leadership. The form can be seen in Appendix C.

**Phase 1—Thematic data analysis.** Thematic data analysis was used to identify, analyze, and report themes from the data collected from the Phase 1 interviews; these themes are “data-driven” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88.), meaning they arise from the results rather than prior theoretical ideas.

The results of this analysis were used to build the Phase 2 survey. The following steps were followed in analyzing Phase 1 data:

---

**Questions to Guide the Semi-Structured Interviews**

**Focused Life History Questions**
- What is your name?
- Are you an Air Force retiree? What was your rank when you retired?
- What was your career field in the Air Force?

**Detailed Experience Questions**
- Over your Air Force career, how many great bosses did you have?
- What distinguished these great bosses from those bosses you would consider as good? What is the first characteristic that comes to mind that separated the great bosses from the good bosses?

**Probing Questions**
These following questions will be used if the interviewees do not mention caring as a characteristic of their great bosses.
- Did caring about and for you and the mission have any bearing on their “greatness”? If yes, please explain. Please describe the actions your great bosses took that showed they cared about and for you and the mission?
- How did you respond to these bosses’ actions of caring about and for you and the mission?

---

*Figure 3.1. Guide for semi-structured interviews in Phase 1.*
• From the raw data gathered through the interviews, caring leadership actions and responses were tabulated according to each interviewee.

• These tabulated data were analyzed via narrative coding and thematic analysis. Exact word or phrase matches of caring leadership actions and responses, including caring leadership action and response words or phrases which have the same meaning but slightly different wording, were identified. Codes were assigned in accordance with caring leadership actions and responses and other topics that are pertinent to this dissertation.

• Related codes were grouped into categories and related categories were used to build themes that were used to develop the survey used in Phase 2.

In this manner, the caring leadership experience data collected through the interviews in Phase 1 informed the survey in Phase 2.

**Phase 2: Generalization and Analysis (Quantitative)**

The objective of the generalization and analysis phase was to ascertain whether or not the caring leadership actions and responses identified in Phase 1 from 12 interviewees, could be generalized across a broader Air Force population of at least 200 retirees. Additionally, comparative analyses were conducted to compare responses of related groups within the broader population. The following steps were taken during this phase:

• Develop a survey based on the literature review, conversations with Air Force retirees, and the caring leadership actions and responses collected in Phase 1. The survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey tool.

• Distribute the survey to Air Force retirees and organizations consisting of Air Force retirees for further distribution. Example organizations are: Air Force Association,
Air Force Sergeants Association, Air Force Chiefs Group, Military Officers Association of America, and the Dragon Lady Association. The survey was also distributed through Facebook and LinkedIn social media.

- Collect and analyze the survey data via SurveyMonkey.

**Phase 2—Survey instrument.** The survey was primarily intended to be a quantitative, Likert-type response design to explore whether or not a broader group of Air Force retirees had experiences with great bosses similar to the interviewees. The survey design was informed by information gained from literature and from the Phase 1 interviews. The survey was developed using de Vaus’ (2014) concept of a “descending the ladder of abstraction” (pp. 45–46). As so inspired, the ladder of abstraction applicable was developed for this research is shown in Figure 3.2. The ladder assisted the researcher in moving from broad, abstract topics to very well defined, specific topics. For this dissertation, the specific topics are the caring actions and the responses; these specific topics were used in developing the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Leadership Ladder of Abstraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most Abstract Topic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Caring leadership exists in the Air Force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Caring leadership is perceived to exist in the Air Force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Air Force members perceive that leadership in the Air Force cares about and for them and the mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Least Abstract Topic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Actions that indicate to subordinates that leadership cares about and for them and the mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples are: the leader respects the subordinate; the leader treats the subordinate as a valued partner; and the leader engages the subordinate in the subordinate's work area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Responses to actions that indicate to subordinates that leadership cares about and for them and the mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples are: the subordinate cares about and for the leader; the subordinate works harder; and the subordinate is more loyal to the leader.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3.2. Inspired caring leadership ladder of abstraction.*
Identifying these specific actions and responses was critical to completing Phase 1 and creating the survey in Phase 2.

The quantitative portion of the survey asked participants to indicate their level of disagreement or agreement with whether they experienced the caring leadership actions and had the behavior responses identified in Phase 1. Additional open-ended qualitative questions were included as well. The survey contained eight groups of questions:

.Filter questions: These questions ensured that only qualified people, Air Force retirees with over 20 years of service, responded to the survey’s questions.

.Broad experience questions: This section contained narrative questions similar to those found in Phase 1. They were designed to stimulate the participants’ reflective thinking regarding their great bosses, characteristics of those great bosses, and differences between those great bosses and other bosses that would be considered good.

.Caring leadership actions toward subordinate questions: These questions identified specific actions taken by leadership that demonstrated caring toward subordinates. Respondents were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with each action. Examples of broad categories of caring actions toward subordinates are: the boss helped subordinates grow personally; the boss helped subordinates grow professionally; the boss helped subordinates perform up to their capabilities; and the boss treated subordinates as valuable members of the unit.

.Caring leadership actions regarding the mission questions: These questions identified specific actions taken by leadership that demonstrated caring toward the mission. Respondents were asked to express their level of agreement with each action. Examples of broad categories of these caring actions are:
• The boss ensured the unit understood the mission.
• The boss pursued mission execution excellence.
• The boss strengthened the unit.

Subordinate responses to caring leadership actions toward subordinates: These questions identified specific behavior responses to leadership actions that demonstrated caring toward subordinates. Respondents were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with each response. Examples of broad categories of responses to actions were the subordinates had a stronger relationship with the boss and the subordinates had stronger performance.

Open-ended questions: These questions afforded the respondents the opportunity to discuss caring leadership in ways that were not covered in the closed-end survey questions.

Participants’ demographics questions: Answers to these questions captured demographic data, gender, and commission status for each respondent.

To prevent confirmation bias and to assist the respondents in answering these questions, survey sections 2 through 6 were introduced by asking respondents to reflect upon the caring leaders they have experienced and to answer each question based upon those experiences.

A pilot survey was provided to five Air Force retirees. Responses were reviewed and commented upon before the final survey was developed and distributed.

Phase 2—Survey participants and distribution. Identifying and securing the participation of approximately 200 retirees was a bit challenging. Though some participants were retirees the researcher knew, additional participants were needed to reach the 200 participant goal. Therefore, known participants were asked to forward the survey to other retirees. The contact e-mail had a statement that set the stage for the survey and the general nature of the
research. Air Force retirees are located across the United States, so the group is diverse. The invitation for Phase 2 participants is in Appendix D. Additionally, the researcher contacted colleagues in specific organizations that have Air Force retirees as members, such as the Air Force Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, Air Force Chiefs Group, Military Officers Association of America, and the Dragon Lady Association. Air Force retirees from those organizations were also invited to participate. And, the survey was also distributed through Facebook and Linkedin social media.

**Phase 2—Survey data collection and analysis.** As stated above, the data gathered from the survey was initially grouped in a 2x2 matrix: men and women and commissioned officers and NCOs as depicted in Table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Demographic Data</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commissioned Officers</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officers</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When it became apparent that female participation was low, the researcher realized that conducting comparative analyses between men and women was not feasible. Comparative analyses were conducted between NCOs and commissioned officers, and Group ≤3 and Group 4+. An IBM SPSS statistics package was used to conduct the following analyses.

**Phase 2—Descriptive data analysis.** Descriptive data analyses regarding caring leadership actions and responses were conducted across the participant population. These analyses consisted of determining mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency and percentage distributions for each identified caring action and response to those actions. These data are displayed in the most appropriate manner, tabular, graphical or statistical (de Vaus,
2014), to “understand the data, detect patterns of relationships, and better communicate the results” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 258). In addition to descriptive data for each survey question, aggregate measures across individual items that measure the same broad category, such as “helped me succeed professionally” and “pursued mission execution excellence” were calculated.

**Phase 2—Correlational data analysis.** Bivariate correlations were conducted to test the “strength of the relationship” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 24) between caring leadership actions and subordinates’ responses. Bivariate correlation analysis provided insight into which specific demonstrations of caring leadership are related to specific subordinate behavior responses. This type of analysis was conducted for the participant group as a whole.

**Phase 2—Comparative data analysis.** Comparative data analyses were conducted to compare findings of one group to the findings of another group. A t-test analysis compared the mean of one group to the mean of its corresponding group, commissioned officers to NCOs, and Group ≤3 and Group 4+ (Green & Salkind, 2010), to determine if there were statistically significant differences between these corresponding groups.

**Summary**

This chapter describes this study’s theoretical approach, step-by-step details, and data collection and analyses plans. Each of these three areas serves as a building block to describe caring leadership actions and responses as experienced in the Air Force and to measure the relationship between these actions and responses within various groups of Air Force retirees.
Chapter IV: Research Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the results of the qualitative and quantitative mixed method research approach described in Chapter III. The research addressed the following overarching questions:

1. How do Air Force retirees describe caring leadership in the Air Force as it relates to caring for the subordinates and for the mission?
2. When Air Force retirees experienced caring leadership, how did they respond?

The specific research questions related to this focus were:

- Research Question 1: From Air Force subordinates’ perspective, what actions taken by a leader demonstrate to subordinates that the leader cares for those subordinates?
- Research Question 2: From Air Force subordinates’ perspective, what actions taken by a leader demonstrate to subordinates that the leader cares for the unit’s mission?
- Research Question 3: How do Air Force subordinates describe their responses to a leader who demonstrates he or she cares for those subordinates and the unit’s mission in this manner?
- Research Question 4: How do caring leadership actions toward Air Force subordinates correlate with subordinate responses?
- Research Question 5: How do non-commissioned and commissioned officers compare in terms of how they describe caring leadership behaviors and their responses to caring leadership? And, how does a group of subordinates who stated they had had either one or two or three great bosses compare with a group of subordinates that stated they had had four or more great bosses in terms of how they describe their great bosses’ caring actions and their responses to those actions?
This mixed method research was conducted in two phases: Phase 1 was qualitative and consisted of interviewing 12 Air Force retirees to characterize caring leadership in the Air Force and to describe responses to caring leadership. Phase 2 was quantitative and consisted of a survey designed to ascertain if the findings from Phase 1 could be generalized across a larger population of Air Force retirees.

Number of Respondents, Data Cleaning, and Demographics

Phase 1 consisted of interviewing 12 Air Force retirees: three male commissioned officers, three female commissioned officers, three male noncommissioned officers, and three female noncommissioned officers. Interviewees were selected through personal network contacts.

The Phase 2 survey received 305 responses in total. There were 228 surveys with complete responses. Responses for two cases appeared to be outliers and were discarded. One contained responses congruent with other participants, but the participant stated in the narrative that he did not think anything useful would come from the survey because it does not address how commanders inspire and how subordinates strive to do their best. This statement caused the researcher to question all of the participant’s responses so the entire case was removed. In the second response considered to be an outlier, the participant provided narrative answers that appeared to be congruent with other participants’ narrative answers; however, the participant responded to the main statements in the survey by answering only strongly disagree or decreased, for each statement in the survey. Therefore, this case was also removed. After these deletions, 226 completed surveys remained.

The demographic mix of the 226 participants was as follows: 6.2% female and 93.8% male; and 58.8% commissioned officers (officers), and 41.2% NCOs. Each participant indicated
in the survey how many great bosses he or she had while in the Air Force. Eleven (4.9%) participants indicated they had one great boss; this group was identified as Group 1. Fifty-two (23%) participants indicated they had two great bosses; this group was identified as Group 2. Forty-nine (21.7%) participants indicated they had three great bosses; this group was identified as Group 3. One hundred and fourteen (50.4%) participants indicated they had four or more great bosses; this group was identified as Group 4+. Group \( \leq 3 \) is the combination of Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3. The Group \( \leq 3 \) and Group 4+ variables were used in the comparative analyses.

Research Questions 1, 2, and 3

The first three research questions were addressed by both the qualitative narrative interview and survey data. Narratives from the Phase 2 survey construction were in response to open-ended survey questions.

**Narrative Phase 1 interview findings.** Phase 1 interview questions fell into three groups:

- Actions taken by the leader that demonstrated care for subordinates,
- Actions taken by the leader that demonstrated care for the mission, and
- Behavior responses to the actions taken by their bosses.

Interview narrative data were reviewed using thematic analysis techniques: code words were identified; interviewee responses were grouped according to the code words; caring actions containing common code words were grouped into topics; and topics were grouped into categories. The categories became the groupings used for survey construction. This thematic analysis was conducted on the two sets of narrative data relating to the caring actions that study participants recalled being taken by a leader: caring for subordinates and caring for the mission.
The same thematic analysis process was used for the response behaviors that study participants felt they exhibited as subordinates in response to leader caring actions.

Thematic analysis\(^4\) identified two sub-themes within the overall Boss Cared for Subordinates theme: Cared for Subordinates Personally and Cared for Subordinates Professionally, and two sub-themes within the overall the Boss Cared for the Mission theme: Cared for Mission and Cared for Empowering the Unit. For the response behaviors subordinates stated they exhibited to the caring actions of great bosses, one theme of Recalled Behavior Responses emerged.

**Cared for subordinates personally.** Thematic analysis of the Cared for Subordinates Personally sub-theme resulted in three categories of actions taken by the leader: elevated the importance of family, helped during family crisis, and helped me grow personally. Table 4.1 shows the actions relative to these categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Interview Code Words</strong></th>
<th><strong>Topics</strong> (Caring Actions Identified by Interviewees)</th>
<th><strong>Categories of Caring Actions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Family, Priority | • Made my family a priority  
• Reached out to my family  
• Remembered my family’s names and interests  
• Helped my family when I was not around | Elevated the importance of family |
| Family, Crisis | • Was supportive during a family crisis  
• Freed me up to take care of family during a crisis | Helped during family crisis |
| Me, Personally | • Took an interest in me personally  
• Pursued knowledge about me  
• Engaged me directly about myself on specific topics that were helpful to me  
• Gave me guidance about life  
• Moving relationship deeper than boss and subordinate |

\(^4\) Themes and sub-themes derived in this study are in title case capitalization to distinguish from identical or similar phrases that may be used in the text.
**Cared for subordinates professionally.** Thematic analysis of the Cared for Subordinates Professionally sub-theme resulted in four categories of actions taken by the leader:

1. Helped me succeed professionally,
2. Helped me perform up to my capabilities,
3. Treated me as a valuable unit member, and
4. Praised and rewarded my good performance.

Table 4.2 shows the boss’s actions related to each category.
Table 4.2

*Thematic Results—Cared for Subordinates Professionally*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code Words</th>
<th>Topics (Caring Actions Identified by Interviewees)</th>
<th>Categories of Caring Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career, Help</td>
<td>· Guided me in my career</td>
<td>Helped me succeed professionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me pursue my professional goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me to get promoted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Explained how to have a successful Air Force career</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Took time to invest in me professionally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me to understand how the Air Force works</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job, Help</td>
<td>· Gave me hands-on feedback about my job performance so I could improve</td>
<td>Helped me perform up to my capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Allowed me to do my job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me live up to the potential he or she saw in me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me to perform at a high level in my job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me understand my job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me see how my job fit into a bigger Air Force perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Gave me more responsibilities as my abilities grew</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me to work through difficult job related issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Spent time with me on job related issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Came to my work area to ensure all was going well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusted, Valued Me</td>
<td>· Asked my opinion</td>
<td>Treated me as a valuable unit member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Shared his or her thoughts with me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Backed my decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Helped me recover after a mistake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Valued my professional abilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Trusted my abilities to handle a difficult job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Saw real performance potential in me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded, Praised Performance</td>
<td>· Bragged on my performance in public</td>
<td>Praised and rewarded my good performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Periodically gave small awards (time off, plaques, atta-boys, etc.) for good performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Was appreciative for good, hard work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cared for mission execution. Thematic analysis of the Cared for Mission Execution sub-theme resulted in three categories: ensured unit understood the mission, engaged personally
in mission execution, and pursued mission execution excellence. Table 4.3 shows the boss’s actions relative to each of these categories.

Table 4.3

Thematic Results—Cared for Mission Execution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code Words</th>
<th>Topics (Caring Actions Identified by Interviewees)</th>
<th>Categories of Caring Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Context, Understand, Plan, Explain, Mission | • Explained context and purpose of mission  
• Explained bigger picture of mission  
• Communicated mission plan to all members of unit  
• Explained roles of all players in overall execution of mission | Ensured unit understood the mission |
| Personally, Engaged, Mission | • Executed mission with unit members  
• Personally went to work area to ensure all was good  
• Personally helped resolve questions and problems  
• Took personal responsibility for unit’s poor performance | Engaged personally in mission execution |
| Excellence, Mission, Improvement | • Took the mission seriously  
• Ensured mission related activities were accomplished correctly  
• Endeavored to always improve mission execution | Pursued mission execution excellence |
| | • Personally lived high mission execution standards | |
| | • Set high standard for himself or herself  
• Put high mission execution above his or her personal desires  
• Always looked for better ways to execute the mission  
• Gave clear directions so there were no misunderstandings  
• Studied the mission to be a better prepared boss  
• Did not fake results  
• Showed importance of mission execution | |

Cared for mission: Empowering the unit. Thematic analysis of the Cared For the Mission with a focus on the Empowering the Unit sub-theme resulted in two categories of actions taken by the leader: strengthened the unit, and motivated the unit. Table 4.4 shows the boss’s actions relative to each of these categories.
Table 4.4

Thematic Results—Cared for Empowering the Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code Words</th>
<th>Topics (Caring Actions Identified by Interviewees)</th>
<th>Categories of Caring Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support, Praise,</strong></td>
<td>• Positive about unit’s performance</td>
<td>Strengthened the unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit</strong></td>
<td>• Supported unit to outside agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Had the team’s back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presented unified front</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Worked to build camaraderie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Held forums to explain topics of interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Appreciated the hard work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present,</strong></td>
<td>• Bragged on unit members</td>
<td>Motivated the unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encouragement,</strong></td>
<td>• Positive about members’ performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
<td>• Congratulated good performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Worked to build connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visited unit members at all hours to see how they are doing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visited unit members wherever they were working to see how they were doing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encouraged unit members to speak up with their good ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Present during difficult working conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response to bosses’ actions: Recalled behavior responses. Thematic analysis of the subordinates’ Response to Great Bosses theme resulted in two sub-themes of Recalled Behavior Responses taken by subordinates to great boss’s actions: Stronger Relationship with Boss and Stronger Job Performance. Subordinates’ responses to questions which asked how they responded to great bosses that cared for you and cared for the mission are in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5

*Thematic Results—Recalled Behavior Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code Words</th>
<th>Topics (Responses)</th>
<th>Categories of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boss, Relationship</td>
<td>• I had a sense of family with my great bosses</td>
<td>Stronger relationship with my boss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I trusted my great bosses more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I didn't want to see my great bosses look bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I was more willing to bring forward bad news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My family appreciated my great bosses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I did not worry about my great bosses' reactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I was willing to follow my great bosses anywhere</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I wanted to exceed my great bosses' expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I wanted to make my great bosses' vision a reality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job, Performance</td>
<td>• I had a greater sense of belonging with the unit</td>
<td>Stronger job performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I had greater freedom in my job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I wanted to treat my subordinates the same way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• my great bosses treated me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I felt less stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I performed at a higher level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I was transparent in my communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I had more confidence in my job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Narrative Phase 1 analysis summary.** The caring actions topics and behavior responses noted above in Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 were used to develop the Phase 2 survey. The themes, sub-themes, and categories identified above and summarized in Table 4.6 were the basis for the survey and the quantitative data analyses.
Table 4.6

**Thematic Analysis Summarized**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cared for Subordinates</td>
<td>Personally</td>
<td>• Helped during family crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Elevated importance of family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me grow personally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professionally</td>
<td>• Treated me as a valuable unit member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me perform to my capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me succeed professionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Praised and rewarded my good performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cared For the Mission</td>
<td>Mission Execution</td>
<td>• Pursued mission execution excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaged personally in mission execution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensured unit understood the mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowering the Unit</td>
<td>• Strengthened the unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Motivated the unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalled Behavior Responses to Boss Caring Actions</td>
<td>Stronger Job Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stronger Relationship with Boss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quantitative survey data analysis.** In Phase 1, the researcher asked the 12 interviewees to describe the actions taken by their great bosses that demonstrated those great bosses cared for the subordinates and the mission. There were 67 caring actions identified and grouped into the four sub-themes: Cared for Subordinates Personally, with 10 actions; Cared for Subordinates Professionally, with 25 actions; Cared for Mission Execution, with 19 actions; and Cared for Empowering the Unit, with 13 actions. Additionally, 21 subordinates’ behavior responses to their great bosses were identified under the two sub-themes: Stronger Job Performance, with 10 behavior responses and Stronger Relationship with Boss, with 11 behavior responses. These recalled caring actions and behavior responses formed the basis of the Phase 2 survey.
The Phase 2 survey was hosted via SurveyMonkey. The survey was anonymous; no personal identifying information was requested through the survey. Survey participants first indicated how many great bosses they had in their military career and based upon their experiences, whether or not their great bosses demonstrated the caring actions contained in the survey. Response options were: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (mildly disagree), 4 (mildly disagree), 5 (agree), or 6 (strongly agree).

Survey participants also indicated how they recalled they had responded to those great bosses that cared for subordinates and for the mission. In general, the survey asked the participants to indicate the recalled amount of change in certain attitudes, motivations, and performance due to their great bosses’ caring actions, relative to their good bosses. Response options were: 1 (decreased), 2 (mildly decreased), 3 (no change), 4 (mildly increased), or 5 (increased).

Descriptive statistics were computed for each of the caring actions and response behaviors. These statistics are found in the tables below. The tables flow in order of themes, sub-themes, and categories. The descriptive statistics include mean scores, standard deviations, percentage distributions, and category means.

**Research Question 1: Cared for Subordinates**

From Air Force subordinates’ perspective, what actions taken by a leader demonstrated to subordinates that the leader cared for them? There were two thematic groupings of responses: Cared for Subordinates Personally and Cared for Subordinates Professionally. The criteria to qualify an action as a caring action was chosen by the researcher to be where 70% or more of the participants strongly agreed that their great boss had demonstrated that specific caring action. The 70% cutoff level highlighted those items with the strongest level of agreement.
**Cared for subordinates personally.** The survey contained 10 actions that demonstrated care for subordinates personally. Some of these caring actions involved family members, and since not all study participants had immediate family or specific personal experiences involving family members during the time they worked for a great boss, a *not applicable* response option was included in the survey. When the statistical analyses were computed, the *not applicable* response was treated as missing data so as not to skew the measures of central tendency results.

The survey contained 10 actions that demonstrated care for subordinates personally. The 226 Air Force retirees, who participated in this research, largely agreed that their great bosses had demonstrated the caring actions (personally) that were identified in the survey. Three caring actions had a mean score between 5.5 and 6.0 (or tending toward the *strongly agree* response) and seven caring actions had a mean score between 5.0 and 5.49 (or tending toward the *agree* response). The 10 actions associated with the Cared for Subordinates Personally sub-theme fell into three categories: “helped during family crisis,” “helped me grow personally,” “elevated importance of family.” The category means were 5.54, 5.50, and 5.50 respectively. Tables 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10 contain the descriptive statistics of the Cared for Subordinates Personally sub-theme. Overall, three (3) of the 10, or 30%, of the Cared for Subordinates Personally action statements had this level of agreement.

Two caring actions comprised the “my great boss helped during a family crisis” category. Table 4.7 contains these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action had a mean score between 5.0 (*agree*) and 6.0 (*strongly agree*). Over 70% of the participants strongly agreed with only one of the two actions in this category: “my great boss freed me up to take care of my family during a family crisis.”
Table 4.7

*Cared for Subordinates Personally: Helped During Family Crisis Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.54)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss freed me up to take care of my family during a family crisis</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=182)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss supported me during a difficult family time</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=170)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N being less than 226 reflects the number of *not applicable* responses.*

Four caring actions comprised the “my great boss helped me grow personally” category.

Table 4.8 contains these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action has a mean score between 5.0 (*agree*) and 6.0 (*strongly agree*). Over 70% of the participants strongly agreed with two of the four caring actions in this category: “my great boss helped me improve myself,” “my great boss took time to get to know me personally,” and “my great boss moved our relationship to a mentoring type relationship.”
Table 4.8

*Cared for Subordinates Personally: Helped Me Grow Personally Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.55)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me improve myself (N=214)</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss took time to get to know me personally (N=217)</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss moved our relationship to a mentoring type relationship (N=211)</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss gave me guidance about life (N=212)</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N being less than 226 reflects the number of not applicable responses.

Four caring actions comprised the “my great boss elevated importance of family” category. Table 4.9 contains these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action had a mean score between 5.0 (agree) and 6.0 (strongly agree). No caring action in this category garnered strong agreement by over 70% of the participants.
Table 4.9

*Cared for Subordinates Personally: Elevated Importance of Family Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.19)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss encouraged me to make my family a priority (N=219)</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss made a point of reaching out to my family (N=214)</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>12.60</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss knew the names of my family members. (N=215)</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped my family when I was not available. (N=183)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N being less than 226 reflects the number of not applicable responses.*

*Cared for subordinates professionally. The survey contained 25 actions that demonstrated care for subordinates professionally. The 226 Air Force retirees, who participated in the survey, largely agreed that their great bosses demonstrated the Cared for Subordinates Professionally sub-theme actions. Nine Cared for Subordinates Professionally actions had a mean score between 5.5 and 6.0 (or tending toward the *strongly agree* response), 15 had a mean score between 5.0 and 5.49 (or tending toward the *agree* response), and one had a mean score*
between 4.5 and 4.99 (or tending toward the mildly agree response). Over 70% of the survey respondents strongly agreed with three (3) of the 25, or 12%, of the Cared for Subordinates Professionally items.

**The 25 actions associated topic.** This element represents the idea that the boss engages the subordinate on a subject or topic (such as the subordinate’s family or mission or job) that is important to the subordinate. This topic is not about the boss; it is about the subordinate. Examples are: “did your son get accepted into the college he wanted,” “come on let’s go to the flight line and see your troops,” and “tell me where we went wrong.” Here the boss’s actions say to the subordinate that nothing is more important to the boss at that point in time than the topic that is important to the subordinate.

The 25 actions associated with the Cared for Subordinates Professionally sub-theme fell into four categories: “treated me as a valuable unit member,” “helped me perform to my capabilities,” “helped me succeed professionally,” and “praised and rewarded my good performance.” The category means were 5.61, 5.41, 5.27, and 5.16, respectively. Tables 4.12, 4.13, and 4.14 contain the descriptive statistics of the Cared for Subordinates Professionally actions.

Four caring actions comprised the “my great boss treated me as a valuable unit member” category. Table 4.10 contains these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action had a mean score between 5.0 (agree) and 6.0 (strongly agree). Over 70% of the participants strongly agreed with one of the four caring actions in this category, “my great boss trusted my abilities to handle a difficult job.”
Eleven caring actions comprised the “my great boss helped me perform to my capabilities” category. Table 4.11 contains these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action had a mean score between 5.0 (agree) and 6.0 (strongly agree). Over 70% of the participants strongly agreed with the following two of the 11 caring actions in this category: “my great boss empowered me to do my job” and “my great boss saw performance potential in me.”
Table 4.1

*Cared for Subordinates Professionally: Helped Me Perform to My Capabilities Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.40; N=226)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss empowered me to do my job</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss saw performance potential in me</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss gave me more responsibilities as my abilities grew</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me live up to the potential he or she saw in me</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me to perform at a high level in my job</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me understand my job</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me recover after a mistake</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Percent Agreeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss spent time with me on job issues</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss came to my work area to make sure all was going well with me</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me work through a difficult job related issue</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me see how my job fit into a bigger Air Force perspective</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six caring actions comprised the “my great boss helped me succeed professionally” category. Table 4.12 contains these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action has a mean score between 5.0 (agree) and 6.0 (strongly agree). Respondents were generally less likely to agree with the statements in this category than in the other Cared for Subordinates Professionally categories, with the percent strongly agreeing ranging between 41.2 and 50.0 percent. No caring action garnered strong agreement by over 70% of the participants.
Table 4.12

*Cared for Subordinates Professionally: Helped Me Succeed Professionally Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.26, N=226)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss took time to invest in me professionally</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me pursue my professional goals</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss guided me in my career</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss played a big role in developing me for promotion</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me to understand how the Air Force works</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss advised me how to have a successful Air Force career</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three caring actions comprised the “my great boss praised and rewarded my good performance” category. Table 4.13 shows these actions and their descriptive statistics. Two actions: “my great boss showed appreciation for good, hard work” and “my great boss bragged
on my performance in public” had a mean score between 5.0 (agree) and 6.0 (strongly agree).

No caring action garnered strong agreement by over 70% of the participants.

Table 4.13

*Cared for Subordinates Professionally: Praised and Rewarded My Good Performance*

*Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.15, N=226)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss showed appreciation for good, hard work</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss bragged on my performance in public</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss periodically gave small awards (time off, plaque, atta-boys, etc) for good performance</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings summary: Research question 1—cared for subordinates.** Research Question 1 was: From Air Force retiree subordinates’ perspective, what actions taken by a leader demonstrated to subordinates that the leader cared for those subordinates?

Using the criteria of having 70% or more of responses falling within the *strongly agree* response category, statements representing caring actions taken by the leader that were most frequently recognized from the subordinates’ perspective. are shown in Table 4.14.
Table 4.14

*Statements About Leader’s Caring Actions of Subordinates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Cared for</em></td>
<td>Helped during family crisis</td>
<td>• My great boss freed me up to take care of my family during a family crisis (73.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Personally</em></td>
<td>Helped me grow personally</td>
<td>• My great boss helped me improve myself (78.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss took time to get to know me personally (75.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elevated importance of family</td>
<td>• (no caring action garnered strong agreement by over 70% of the participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cared for</em></td>
<td>Treated me as a valuable unit member</td>
<td>• My great boss trusted my abilities to handle a difficult job (74.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Professionally</em></td>
<td>Helped me perform to my</td>
<td>• My great boss empowered me to do my job (77.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>capabilities</td>
<td>• My great boss saw performance potential in me (72.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Praised and rewarded my</td>
<td>• (no caring action garnered strong agreement by over 70% of the participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>good performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 2: Cared for the Mission**

From Air Force subordinates’ perspective, what actions taken by a leader demonstrate to subordinates that the leader cared for the unit’s mission? There were two sub-themes: Cared for Mission Execution and Cared for Empowering the Unit. The criteria to qualify an action as a caring action was chosen by the researcher to be where 70% or more of the participants strongly agreed that their great boss had demonstrated that particular caring action. The threshold of 70% was chosen to provide sufficient margin to prevent inflation of conclusions.
**Cared for mission execution.** The survey contained 19 actions that demonstrated the great bosses cared for mission execution. The 226 Air Force retirees who participated in the survey overwhelmingly stated that they had had great bosses that had demonstrated care for mission execution and agreed with the caring actions in the survey. Ten Cared for Mission Execution actions had a mean score between 5.5 to 6.0 (or tending toward the *strongly agree* response) and nine Cared for Mission Execution actions had a mean score between 5.0 and 5.49 (or tending toward the *agree* response). Over 70% of the respondents strongly agreed with nine (9) of the 19, or about 50%, of the Cared for Mission Execution action statements.

The actions associated with the Cared for Mission Execution sub-theme fell into three categories: “pursued mission execution excellence,” “engaged personally in mission execution,” and “ensured unit understood the mission.” The category means were 5.58, 5.32, and 5.29, respectively. Tables 4.15, 4.16, and 4.17 contain the descriptive statistics of the Cared for Mission Execution sub-theme.

Twelve caring actions comprise the category entitled my great boss “pursued mission execution excellence.” Table 4.15 shows these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action has a mean score between 5.0 (*agree*) and 6.0 (*strongly agree*). Over 70% of the participants strongly agreed with five of the 12 mission execution caring actions: “my great boss took the unit’s mission seriously,” “my great boss set high standards for himself or herself,” “my great boss personally lived up to high mission execution standards,” “my great boss ensured that mission related activities were accomplished correctly,” and “my great boss endeavored to improve mission execution.”
### Table 4.15

*Cared for Mission Execution: Pursued Mission Execution Excellence Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.59; N=226)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss took the unit’s mission seriously</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss set high standards for himself / herself</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss personally lived up to high mission execution standards</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss ensured that mission related activities were accomplished correctly</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss endeavored to improve mission execution</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pencil-whipping reports was forbidden by my great boss</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My great boss gave clear direction to the unit regarding mission execution to prevent confusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0.4</th>
<th>0.9</th>
<th>6.2</th>
<th>25.7</th>
<th>66.8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My great boss studied the mission to be better prepared to lead the unit in executing the mission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0.4</th>
<th>0.9</th>
<th>6.6</th>
<th>31.0</th>
<th>61.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My great boss looked for better ways to execute the mission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0.4</th>
<th>4.9</th>
<th>37.6</th>
<th>57.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

From what I could tell, my great boss put high mission execution above his/her own personal desires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1.8</th>
<th>5.3</th>
<th>29.2</th>
<th>63.7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My great boss refused to let administrative staff work hinder mission execution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>2.7</th>
<th>11.1</th>
<th>36.7</th>
<th>49.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My great boss worked hard to get feedback from our customers

| Score | Rating | 0 | 0.4 | 1.8 | 13.3 | 40.3 | 44.2 |
Four caring actions comprised the “my great boss engaged personally in mission execution” category. Table 4.16 shows these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action has a mean score between 5.0 (agree) and 6.0 (strongly agree), but no caring action garnered strong agreement by over 70% of the participants.

Table 4.16
*Cared for Mission Execution: Engaged Personally in Mission Execution Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.32; N=226)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped to execute the mission with unit members</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss took personal responsibility for the unit’s poor performance</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss personally came to my work area to make sure all activities were smoothly being executed</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four caring actions comprised the “my great boss ensured the unit understood the mission” category. Table 4.17 shows these actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action has a mean score between 5.0 (*agree*) and 6.0 (*strongly agree*). Again, no caring action garnered strong agreement by over 70% of the participants.
Table 4.17

*Cared for Mission Execution: Ensured Unit Understood the Mission Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.29) N=226*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss communicated the mission plan to all members of the unit</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss explained the context and the purpose of the mission</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss explained how the mission fit into the bigger picture</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>313.7</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss explained the roles of all the players in the overall execution of the mission</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>420.4</td>
<td>837.2</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cared for empowering the unit.** The survey contained 13 mission actions that demonstrated care for empowering the unit. The 226 Air Force retiree survey respondents overwhelmingly stated that the Cared for Empowering the Unit actions were indicative of those actions taken by their great bosses that demonstrated they cared for the mission. Table 4.18 shows that 10 of the 13 Empowering the Unit caring actions had a mean score between 5.5 to 6.0
(or tending toward the strongly agree response) and three had a mean score between 5.0 and 5.49 (or tending toward the agree response).

The actions associated with the Cared for Empowering the Unit sub-theme fell into two categories: “strengthening the unit” and “motivating the unit.” The category means were 5.56 and 5.5, respectively. Tables 4.18 and 4.19 provide the descriptive statistics of the empowering the unit sub-theme.

Five caring actions comprised the “my great boss strengthened the unit” category. Table 4.18 shows actions related to strengthening the unit and their descriptive statistics. Each action had a mean score between 5.0 (agree) and 6.0 (strongly agree). Over 70% of the participants strongly agreed with two caring actions in this category: “my great boss had the unit’s back” and “my great boss supported the unit when speaking with outside agencies.”
Table 4.18

*Cared for Empowering the Unit: Strengthened the Unit Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.56; N=226)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss had the unit’s back</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss supported the unit when speaking with outside agencies</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss worked to build camaraderie in the unit</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss worked to ensure the unit had the resources it needed to execute the mission</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss held informal forums to explain topics of interest to unit members</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>838.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eight caring actions comprised the “motivating the unit” category. Table 4.19 displays these “motivating the unit” caring actions and their descriptive statistics. Each action has a mean score between 5.0 (agree) and 6.0 (strongly agree). Over 70% of the participants strongly agreed with the two motivating the unit caring actions: “my great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance,” and “my great boss praised good performance.” Between 50% and 60% of the respondents also strongly agreed with the other three statements in this category.

Table 4.19

*Cared for Empowering the Unit/Category: Motivated the Unit Descriptive Statistics (Overall category mean = 5.56; N=226)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Mildly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss praised good performance</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss showed he or she appreciated the unit’s hard work</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss was with the unit during difficult working conditions</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance 5.6 0.58 0 0 0.9 2.2 30.1 66.8

My great boss worked to connect with the people in the unit 5.53 0.63 0 0 0.4 5.8 34.1 59.7

My great boss bragged on my unit teammates 5.29 0.87 0 0.9 2.2 15.0 30.5 51.3

My great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing 5.23 0.94 0.9 0.4 2.7 14.2 28.8 53.1

**Findings summary: Research question 2.** Research Question 2 was: From Air Force subordinates’ perspective, what actions taken by a leader demonstrate to subordinates that the leader cares for the unit’s mission?

Using the criteria of having 70% of responses falling within the *strongly agree* response category, the statements on caring leaders’ actions showing caring about the mission are shown in Table 4.20.
Table 4.20

Statements About Caring Actions According to Sub-Themes and Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cared for Mission Execution</td>
<td>Pursued mission execution excellence</td>
<td>• My great boss took the unit’s mission seriously (84.5%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss set high standards for himself or herself (80.5%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss personally lived up to high mission execution standards (78.3%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss ensured that mission related activities were accomplished correctly (72.1%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss endeavored to improve mission execution (73.9%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cared for Empowering the Unit</td>
<td>Strengthened the unit</td>
<td>• My great boss had the unit’s back (77.0%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss supported the unit when speaking with outside agencies (74.3%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivated the unit</td>
<td>• My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance (75.7%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss praised good performance (71.2%).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3: Subordinates’ Responses to Leader Actions

How do Air Force subordinates describe their responses to a leader who demonstrates he or she cares about and for those subordinates and the unit’s mission in this manner? There were two sub-themes: Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss. The criteria to qualify as a response was chosen by the researcher to be where 70% or more of the participants strongly showed an increase in a particular key motivation, attitude, or performance area.

Recalled behavior responses. The survey contained 21 items related to behavior responses to the caring actions that great bosses showed toward the subordinates and the mission.
The 226 Air Force retiree survey participants indicated they thought they had a positive change in all 21 attitudes, motivations, and performance descriptors because of the actions of their great bosses. Two items, “My stress level at work” and “My sense of worry about my great bosses’ reactions to bad news” are of such nature that a decrease actually shows an improvement. Therefore, to be congruent for statistical computation purposes with the remaining 19 responses, the scores of these two responses were reverse coded. These two responses now match the original response options: 1(*decreased*), 2(*somewhat decreased*), 3(*no change*), 4(*somewhat increased*), or 5(*increased*); the 19 responses retained these codes.

Ten items had response mean scores between 4.5 and 5.0 (or tending toward the *increased* or improved behavior), nine responses had a mean score between 4.0 and 4.49 (or tending toward the *somewhat increased* or mildly improved behavior), and two responses had a mean score between 3.0 and 3.49 (or tending toward the *no change* in behavior). The mid-point between *somewhat increased* and *increased* is 4.5. Ten responses had mean scores between 4.5 and 5.0 and nine responses had mean scores between 4.0 and 4.49. The mid-point between *somewhat decreased* and *no change* is 3.5, as applicable to reverse coding. Two reverse coded responses had mean scores between 3.0 and 3.49. Survey participants thought their behavior response improved (increased) for slightly more than half of the behavior response items.

The response to caring action behaviors fell into two sub-themes: Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss. The sub-theme means were 4.71 and 4.49, respectively. Tables 4.21 and 4.22, show the Recalled Behavior Response descriptive statistics.

Ten caring responses comprised the Stronger Job Performance sub-theme. Table 4.21 contains these response distributions and their descriptive statistics. Each response, except for the response involving “My stress level at work” has a mean score between 4.0 (*somewhat*
increased) and 5.0 (increased). Respondents tended to view their behavior responses as increased. Using the criteria of at least 70%, survey participants indicated that they responded to the caring actions of their great bosses by having an increase in six response items. These items included, “my desire to work hard increased,” “my sense of belonging to the unit increased,” “my sense of loyalty to the unit increased,” “my desire to treat my subordinates the same way my great bosses treated me increased,” “my performance level increased,” and “my sense of freedom in my job increased.” The remaining items in this sub-theme all had less than 70% indicating their positive behavior increased, with the most frequent alternative response of “somewhat increased.”
Table 4.21

*Stronger Job Performance Descriptive Statistics (Overall mean = 4.48; N=226)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decreased (%)</th>
<th>Somewhat Decreased (%)</th>
<th>Did Not Change (%)</th>
<th>Somewhat Increased (%)</th>
<th>Increased (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My desire to work hard . . .</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>88.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of belonging to the unit . .</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>79.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of loyalty to the unit . .</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>16.40</td>
<td>80.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My desire to treat my subordinates the same way my great bosses treated me . .</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>11.90</td>
<td>82.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My performance level . .</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>18.60</td>
<td>77.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of freedom in my job . .</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>77.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My confidence in my job . .</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>26.50</td>
<td>67.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of mission focus . .</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>22.60</td>
<td>69.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My transparency in my communications with my great bosses . .</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>27.90</td>
<td>57.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My stress level at work . .</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>31.40</td>
<td>16.80</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>10.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eleven caring responses comprised the sub-theme: Stronger Relationship with the Boss.

Table 4.22 below contains these responses and their descriptive statistics. Each response, except for the response involving “My sense of worry about my great bosses’ reactions to bad news” had a mean score between 4.0 (*somewhat increased*) and 5.0 (*increased*). Using the criteria of at least 70% of the survey participants indicating they responded to the caring actions of their great
bosses by having an increase five response items. These items are: “my sense of trust in my great bosses increased;” “my willingness to follow my great bosses increased”; “my desire to prevent my great bosses from looking bad increased”; “my desire to exceed my great bosses’ expectations increased”; and “my desire to make my great bosses' vision a reality increased.”

The remaining items in this sub-theme all had less than 70% indicating their positive behavior increased, with the most frequent alternative response of “somewhat increased.”

Table 4.22

Recalled Behavior Responses: Stronger Relationship with the Boss Descriptive Statistics
(Overall category mean = 4.37; N=226)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decreased (%)</th>
<th>Somewhat Decreased (%)</th>
<th>Did Not Change (%)</th>
<th>Somewhat Increased (%)</th>
<th>Increased (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My sense of trust in my great bosses . . .</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>15.90</td>
<td>79.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My willingness to follow my great bosses . . .</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>16.80</td>
<td>78.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My desire to prevent my great bosses from looking bad . .</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>78.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My desire to exceed my great bosses’ expectations . . .</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>22.10</td>
<td>74.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My desire to make my great bosses' vision a reality . .</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>74.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean 4</td>
<td>Median 4</td>
<td>Mean 6</td>
<td>Median 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My drive to prevent my great bosses’ disappointment in me . . .</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>64.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of freedom to bring bad news to my great bosses . . .</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>33.60</td>
<td>56.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My desire to seek the approval of my great bosses . . .</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>19.50</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>54.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense that family is a priority . . .</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>32.70</td>
<td>48.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family's sense of appreciation of my great bosses . . .</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23.90</td>
<td>31.90</td>
<td>43.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of worry about my great bosses’ reactions to bad news . . .</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>26.50</td>
<td>22.10</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>12.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings summary: Research question 3.** Research Question 3 was: How do Air Force subordinates describe their responses to a leader who demonstrated he or she cared for those subordinates and the unit’s mission? Table 4.23 shows responses to this question—ones that met the criterion of 70% or more—indicating how great bosses enhanced subordinates’ key attitudes, behaviors and performance.
Table 4.23

*Recalled Behavior Responses of Subordinates to Good Bosses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Theme</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Stronger Job Performance</em></td>
<td>• My desire to work hard increased (88.5%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My sense of belonging to the unit increased (79.6%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My sense of loyalty to the unit increased (80.5%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My desire to treat my subordinates the same way my great bosses treated me increased (82.7%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My performance level increased (77.9%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My sense of freedom in my job increased (77.0%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Stronger Relationship with the Boss</em></td>
<td>• My sense of trust in my great bosses increased (79.6%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My willingness to follow my great bosses increased (78.3%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My desire to prevent my great bosses from looking bad increased (78.8%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My desire to exceed my great bosses’ expectations increased (74.3%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My desire to make my great bosses’ vision a reality (74.3%).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research question 4: Correlation Between Caring Actions and Responses**

How do caring leadership actions toward Air Force subordinates correlate with subordinates’ responses?

*Caring categories correlated with behavior responses.* In order to assess the correlation between caring actions and behavior responses, the researcher first conducted bivariate correlation computations comparing the 12 caring action categories (and their caring actions) and the two recalled behavior response sub-themes. Table 4.24 shows the correlation coefficients between each caring action category (and each caring action) and each of the two behavior responses. Actions denoted with a “#” had bivariate correlations of .400 or higher, indicating at least a moderate relationship between the caring category (and caring action) and the subordinate response, with 16% (.400 x .400) of their variances shared.
## Table 4.24

**Correlations Between Caring Action Categories, Caring Actions, and Recalled Behavior Response Sub-Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Category</th>
<th>Behavior Response: Stronger Job Performance</th>
<th>Behavior Response: Stronger Relationship with Boss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helped during family crisis</td>
<td>.232**</td>
<td>.332**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Freed me up to take care of my family during a family crisis</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>.256**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Supported me during a difficult family time</td>
<td>.335**</td>
<td>.362**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped me grow personally</td>
<td>.320**</td>
<td>.386**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Helped me improve myself</td>
<td>.181**</td>
<td>.226**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Took time to get to know me personally</td>
<td>.245**</td>
<td>.279**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Moved our relationship to mentoring type relationship</td>
<td>.288**</td>
<td>.361**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Gave me guidance about life</td>
<td>.285**</td>
<td>.357**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated importance of family</td>
<td>.275**</td>
<td>.321**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Encouraged me to make my family a priority</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.170*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Made a point of reaching out to my family</td>
<td>.319**</td>
<td>.384**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Knew the names of my family members</td>
<td>.212**</td>
<td>.288**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Helped my family when I was not available</td>
<td>.277**</td>
<td>.302**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated me as a valuable unit member</td>
<td>.353**</td>
<td>.386**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Trusted my abilities to handle a difficult job</td>
<td>.242**</td>
<td>.246**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Valued my professional abilities</td>
<td>.300**</td>
<td>.310**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Shared his or her thoughts with me</td>
<td>.269**</td>
<td>.328**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Asked my opinion</td>
<td>.303**</td>
<td>.323**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped me perform to my capabilities</td>
<td>.477**</td>
<td>.491**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Empowered me to do my job</td>
<td>.229**</td>
<td>.175**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Saw performance potential in me</td>
<td>.353**</td>
<td>.376**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Gave me more responsibilities as my abilities grew</td>
<td>.416##**</td>
<td>.404##**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Helped me live up to the potential he or she saw in me</td>
<td>.374**</td>
<td>.353**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Helped me perform at a high level</td>
<td>.403##**</td>
<td>.382**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
level in my job
20 Gave me hands-on feedback about my job performance so I could improve .313** .288**
21 Helped me understand my job .237** .265**
22 Helped me recover after a mistake .339** .289**
23 Spent time with me on job related issues .318** .364**
24 Came to my work area to make sure all was going well with me .333** .393**
25 Helped me work through a difficult related issue .319** .391**
26 Helped me see how my job fit into a bigger Air Force perspective .341** .365**
Helped me succeed professionally .395** .435**
27 Took time to invest in me professionally .328** .346**
28 Helped me pursue my professional goals .270** .314**
29 Guided in me in my career .333** .383**
30 Played a big role in developing me for promotion .333** .358**
31 Helped me to understand how the Air Force works .310** .370**
32 Advised me how to have a successful Air Force career .352** .354**
Praised and rewarded my good performance .483** .506**
33 Showed appreciation for good, hard work .397** .385**
34 Bragged on my performance in public .427**#** .444##**
35 Periodically gave small awards (time off, atta-boys, etc) for good performance .393** .432##**
Pursued mission execution excellence .432** .438**
36 Took the unit’s mission seriously .317** .276**
37 Set high standards for himself or herself .236** .236**
38 Personally lived up to high mission execution standards .288** .252**
39 Ensured that mission related activities were accomplished .314** .321**
correctly
40 Endeavored to improve mission execution
41 Pencil-whipping reports was forbidden
42 Gave clear direction to the unit regarding mission execution to prevent confusion
43 Studied the mission to be better prepared to lead the unit in executing the mission
44 Looked for better ways to execute the mission
45 Put high mission execution above his or her own personal interests
46 Refused to let administrative staff work hinder mission execution
47 Worked hard to get feedback from our customers
Engaged personally in mission execution
48 Helped to execute the mission with unit members
49 Took personal responsibility for the unit’s poor performance
50 Personally came to my work area to make sure all activities were smoothly being executed
Ensured unit understood mission
51 Communicated the mission plan to all members of the unit
52 Explained the context and the purpose of the mission
53 Explained how the mission fit into the big picture
54 Explained the roles of all the players in the overall execution of the mission
Strengthened the unit
55 Had the unit’s back
56 Supported the unit when
speaking to outside agencies

57 Held informal meetings to explain topics of interest to unit members

58 Worked to build camaraderie in the unit

59 Worked to ensure the unit had the resources it needed to execute the mission

Motivated the unit

60 Was positive about the unit and its members’ performance

61 Praised good performance

62 Showed he or she appreciated the unit’s hard work

63 Was with the unit during difficult working conditions

64 Was positive about the unit and its members’ performance

65 Worked to connect with people in the unit

66 Bragged on my unit teammates

67 Visited unit members at all hours in their work are to see how they were doing

Table 4.25 shows the correlation coefficients between each caring action category and each of the two behavior response categories, sequenced by highest to lowest correlation coefficient to highlight the strength of the relationship between a particular caring action category and the two behavior response categories.
Table 4.25  
*Caring Action Categories Correlated with Behavior Response Sub-Themes (Sequenced by Highest to Lowest Correlation Coefficient)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action Category</th>
<th>Response Behavior: Stronger Job Performance</th>
<th>Caring Action Category</th>
<th>Response Behavior: Stronger Relationship with Boss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivated the unit</td>
<td>.553**</td>
<td>Motivated the unit</td>
<td>.545**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praised and rewarded my good performance</td>
<td>.483**</td>
<td>Praised and rewarded my good performance</td>
<td>.506**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped me perform to my capabilities</td>
<td>.477</td>
<td>Pursued mission execution excellence</td>
<td>.506**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthened the unit</td>
<td>.467**</td>
<td>Helped me perform to my capabilities</td>
<td>.491**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged personally in mission execution</td>
<td>.435**</td>
<td>Strengthened the unit</td>
<td>.458**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursued mission execution excellence</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>Engaged personally in mission execution</td>
<td>.450**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped me succeed professionally</td>
<td>.395**</td>
<td>Helped me succeed professionally</td>
<td>.435**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensured unit understood mission</td>
<td>.361**</td>
<td>Treated me as a valuable unit member</td>
<td>.386**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated me as a valuable unit member</td>
<td>.353**</td>
<td>Helped me grow personally</td>
<td>.386**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped me grow personally</td>
<td>.320**</td>
<td>Ensured unit understood mission</td>
<td>.385**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated importance of family</td>
<td>.275**</td>
<td>Helped during family crisis</td>
<td>.332**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped during family crisis</td>
<td>.232**</td>
<td>Elevated importance family</td>
<td>.321**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
Regression analysis was conducted to determine the caring action categories that most contributed to Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss. Due to high bivariate correlations (.860), regression analysis was conducted with the “motivated the unit” and “strengthened the unit” caring action categories combined into a single category (MotStrength). Similarly, due to high bivariate correlations (.757), the “helped me perform to my capabilities” and “helped me succeed professionally” categories were combined into a single category (CapablSucceed).

The regression model (Table 4.26), with Stronger Job Performance as the dependent variable and the caring action category scores as the independent variables, showed the MotStrength and “engaged personally in mission execution” caring categories had significant influence on Stronger Job Performance, with $R^2 = .304$, $F(1, 142) = 28.885$, $p = .000$. Table 4.26 shows the coefficients data associated with this model. Categories in the Cared for the Mission theme influenced Stronger Job Performance. MotStrength, which includes the motivating and strengthening the unit caring categories, had the highest ($\beta = .431$) standardized beta coefficient, followed by statements in the “engaged personally in the mission execution” ($\beta = .177$). None of the Cared for Personally or Cared for Professionally caring action categories influenced Stronger Job Performance.

Table 4.26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MotStrength</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.872</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Personally Mission Execution</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regression analysis was also conducted with Stronger Relationship with Boss as the dependent variable. This model showed the newly defined MotStrength and the “praised my good performance,” and “helped with family crisis” categories influenced the Stronger Relationship with Boss variable, with R-square = .282, F(1, 141) = 17.144, p = .000. Table 4.27 shows the coefficients data associated with this model. Categories in all three sub-themes, Cared for Subordinates Personally, Cared for Subordinates Professionally, and Cared for the Mission Execution influenced Stronger Job Performance. MotStrength, which includes the Cared for Mission Execution motivating and strengthening the unit categories, had the highest (β = .293) standardized beta coefficient, followed by categories “praised my good performance” (β = .202) and “engaged personally in the mission execution” (β = .177).

Table 4.27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MotStrength</td>
<td>.293</td>
<td>3.136</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praised My Good Performance</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>2.215</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped Family Crisis</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>2.154</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, Stronger Job Performance was influenced by caring categories in the Cared for Empowering the Unit and Cared for Mission Execution sub-themes, whereas, Stronger Relationship with Boss was influenced by caring categories in the Cared for Empowering the Unit as well as Cared for Subordinates Personally and Cared for Subordinates Professionally sub-themes.
**Caring actions correlated with responses.** The researcher conducted correlation computations between caring actions and the individual behavior responses. Caring actions that have a greater than .400 correlation coefficient with specific behavior responses are shown in Tables 4.28 and 4.29.

Table 4.28

*Caring Actions Correlated at $\geq .400$ with Recalled Behavior Responses in the Stronger Job Performance Sub-theme.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Response</th>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Sense Loyalty Increased</td>
<td>My great boss was positive about the unit and its members</td>
<td>.475**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss worked to build camaraderie in the unit</td>
<td>.454**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss praised good performance</td>
<td>.432**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss supported the unit when speaking with outside agencies</td>
<td>.409**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>great boss was with the unit during difficult working conditions</td>
<td>.407**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of Belonging to the Unit Increased</td>
<td>My great boss praised good performance</td>
<td>.449**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Sense of Freedom in My Job Increased</td>
<td>My great boss helped me perform at a high level in my job</td>
<td>.445**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance</td>
<td>.400**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Sense of Mission Focus Increased</td>
<td>My great boss was with the unit during difficult working conditions</td>
<td>.418**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss bragged on my unit teammates</td>
<td>.417**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss studied the mission to be better prepared to lead the unit in executing the mission</td>
<td>.414**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance.

My great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing.

**My Confidence in My Job Increased**

My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance.

My great boss personally came to my work area to make sure all activities were smoothly executed.

**My Performance Level Increased**

My great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing.

**Note.** **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).**

**Table 4.29**

*Caring Actions Correlated at ≥ .400 with Recalled Behavior Responses in the Strong Relationship with Boss Sub-theme*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Response Category</th>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Family’s Sense of Appreciation of My Great Bosses Increased</td>
<td>My great boss made a point of reaching out to my family</td>
<td>.459**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing</td>
<td>.440**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss bragged on my unit teammates</td>
<td>.426**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance</td>
<td>.425**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My great boss worked hard to get feedback from our customers</td>
<td>.423**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Sense of Trust in My Great Bosses Increased</td>
<td>Pencil-whipping reports was forbidden by my great boss .440**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss praised good performance</td>
<td>.438**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing</td>
<td>.433**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss bragged on my unit teammates</td>
<td>.414**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss was with the unit during difficult working conditions</td>
<td>.412**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Sense that Family is a Priority Increased</th>
<th>My great boss supported me during a difficult family time .419**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss held informal forums to explain topics of interest to unit members</td>
<td>.414**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss worked hard to get feedback from our customers</td>
<td>.411**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My Transparency in My Communications with My Great Bosses Increased

My great boss helped me recover after a mistake .414**

My great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing .414**

My Desire to Make My Great Bosses’ Vision a Reality Increased

My great boss bragged on my unit teammates .406**

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Findings summary: Research question 4. Research Question 4 was: How do caring leadership actions toward Air Force subordinates correlate with subordinates’ behavior responses?

Table 4.24 shows that the caring category “motivating the unit” had the largest correlation coefficient for both Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss, with .553 and .545 respectively. Additionally, five other caring categories had moderate correlations of ≥ .400 with both Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss: “praised and rewarded my good performance,” “helped me to perform to my capabilities,” “strengthened the unit,” “engaged personally in mission execution,” and “pursued mission excellence” The category “helped me succeed professionally,” also had a moderate correlation of ≥ .400 with Stronger Job Performance. The remaining categories did not have correlations ≥ .400 with Stronger Job performance or Stronger Relationship with Boss.

The specific caring actions that had correlation coefficients ≥ .400 with either Stronger Job Performance or Stronger Relationship with Boss are shown in Table 4.30.
Table 4.30

Statements About Caring Actions According to Sub-Themes and Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Response</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statements (Correlation Coefficient)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stronger Job Performance</td>
<td>Motivated Unit</td>
<td>• Was positive about the unit and its members’ performance (.501)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bragged on my unit teammates (.469)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Praised good performance (.457)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Was with the unit during difficult working conditions (.456)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Visited unit members at all hours in their work are to see how they were doing (.431)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Praised and Rewarded My Good Performance</td>
<td>• Bragged on my performance in public (.427)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helped Me Perform to My Capabilities:</td>
<td>• Gave me more responsibilities as my abilities grew (.416)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me perform at a high level in my job (.403)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger Relationship with the Boss</td>
<td>Strengthened unit</td>
<td>• Worked to build camaraderie in the unit (.419)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaged Personally in Mission Execution</td>
<td>• Personally came to my work area to make sure all activities were smoothly being executed (.407)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regression analysis showed that caring categories in the Cared for the Mission theme influenced Stronger Job Performance. The categories MotStrength and “engaged personally in mission execution” significantly influenced the behavior response category Stronger Job Performance. Only categories in the Cared for the Mission theme influenced Stronger Job Performance. Regression analysis also showed that caring categories MotStrength, “praised my good performance,” and “helped with family crisis,” significantly influenced the Stronger Relationship with Boss response category. Caring categories in the
Cared for the Mission, Cared for Subordinate Personally, and Cared for Subordinate Professionally themes influenced Stronger Relationship with Boss.

A variety of caring actions are correlated with Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss responses with correlation coefficients of ≥ .400. The caring actions that correlate with both categories of responses are: “my boss praised good performance,” “my great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing,” my great boss bragged on my unit teammates,” “my great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance,” and “my great boss was with the unit during difficult working conditions.” Two key themes are identified in these caring actions: the boss praising good performance and the boss sacrificing himself or herself and being present with the unit during less than optimum working conditions.

**Research Question 5: Group Comparisons**

How do non-commissioned and commissioned officers compare in terms of how they describe the caring actions of their great bosses and their own behavior responses to caring leadership? And, how does a group of respondents who said they had one or two or three great bosses compare with a group of respondents that stated they had four or more great bosses compare on the 67 caring actions and the 21 behavior responses to those actions? T-test comparisons were made between the following groups: NCOs and officers and Group ≤3 and Group 4+ to address these questions.

**NCOs compared to officers.** Regarding caring actions, 13 of 67 caring actions showed statistically significant differences between NCOs and officers. More than half (7) of the 13 caring actions where there were differences between NCOs and officers were in the Cared for Subordinate Professionally sub-theme. The rest were spread across the Cared for Subordinate
Personally sub-theme (2) and the Cared for Mission Execution sub-theme (4). No significant differences were identified between NCOs and officers for the other 54 caring actions and the 21 behavior responses to great bosses. Specific comparisons are presented below in accordance with each caring action behavior response sub-themes.

**Caring for subordinates personally actions: Comparing NCOs and officers.** Significant differences between NCOs and officers were identified for two of the 10 Cared for Subordinates Personally actions. These two caring actions and associated *t*-test results are found in Table 4.31. No significant differences were identified between NCOs and officers for the remaining eight personal caring actions.

Table 4.31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistically Significant T-tests Comparing NCOs and Officers for Cared for Subordinates Personally Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss freed me up to take care of my family during a crisis. N=182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss supported me during a difficult time. N=170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * Designates df number calculated to be less than the number of cases minus the number of groups. This was used because the group did not have equal variances. The df shown in the table has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Cared for subordinates professionally actions: Comparing NCOs and officers.**

Significant differences between NCOs and officers were identified for seven (7) of the 25 Caring for Subordinates Professionally actions. These seven caring actions and associated *t*-Test results...
are found in Table 4.32. No significant differences between NCOs and officers were identified for the remaining 18 of the 25 professional caring actions.

Table 4.32

Statistically Significant T-tests Comparing NCOs and Officers for Cared for Subordinates Professionally Actions. (NCOs, N=93; Officers, N=133)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean Scores for NCOs/Officers</th>
<th>Independent-Samples t-Test Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss valued my professional abilities.</td>
<td>5.75/5.56</td>
<td>$t(224)^* = 2.496, p = .013$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss came to my work area to make sure all was going well with me.</td>
<td>5.48/5.06</td>
<td>$t(233)^* = 3.724, p &lt; .001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me understand my job.</td>
<td>5.44/5.20</td>
<td>$t(224) = 2.384, p = .018$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss spent time with me on job related issues.</td>
<td>5.38/5.16</td>
<td>$t(224) = 2.176, p = .031$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me to understand how the Air Force works.</td>
<td>5.34/5.07</td>
<td>$t(224) = 2.471, p = .014$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss helped me through a difficult job related issue.</td>
<td>5.31/4.99</td>
<td>$t(224) = 2.859, p = .005$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss periodically gave small awards (time off, plaque, atta-boys, etc.) for good performance.</td>
<td>5.16/4.63</td>
<td>$t(220)^* = 3.805, p &lt; .001$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Designates df number calculated to be less than the number of cases minus the number of groups. This was used because the group did not have equal variances. The df shown in the table has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Cared for mission execution actions: Comparing NCOs and officers. Significant differences between NCOs and officers were identified for two of the 19 Cared for Mission Execution actions. These two caring actions and associated t-Test results are found in Table 4.33.
No significant differences between NCOs and officers were identified for the remaining 17 of 19 caring actions in this sub-theme.

Table 4.33

Statistically Significant T-tests Comparing NCOs and Officers for Cared for Mission Execution Actions (NCOs, N=93; Officers, N=133)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean Scores for NCOs/Officers</th>
<th>Independent-Samples t-Test Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss set high standards for himself and herself.</td>
<td>5.69/5.83</td>
<td>t(162)* = -2.094, p = .038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss personally came to my work area to make sure all activities were smoothly being executed.</td>
<td>5.39/4.88</td>
<td>t(224)* = 4.428, p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Designates df number calculated to be less than the number of cases minus the number of groups. This was used because the group did not have equal variances. The df shown in the table has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Cared for empowering the unit actions: Comparing NCOs and officers. Significant differences between NCOs and officers were identified for two of the 13 Cared for Empowering the Unit actions. These two caring actions and their associated t-Tests results are located in Table 4.34. No significant differences between NCOs and officers were identified for the remaining 11 of 13 caring actions in this sub-theme.

Table 4.34

Statistically Comparing NCOs and Officers for Cared for Empowering the Unit Actions (NCOs, N=93; Officers, N=133)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean Scores for NCOs/Officers</th>
<th>Independent-Samples t-Test Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss held informal forums to explain topics of interest to unit members.</td>
<td>5.35/5.08</td>
<td>t(224) = 2.372, p = .019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss visited unit members at all hours in the work area to see how they were doing.</td>
<td>5.44/5.18</td>
<td>t(224) = 2.067, p = .040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recalled behavior responses: Comparing NCOs and officers. No significant differences were identified between NCOs and officers the 21 behavior responses to great bosses.

*Group ≤3 compared to Group 4+.** Significant differences between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ were identified for five (5) of the 67 caring actions. Most (4) of the five caring actions where there were differences between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ groups were in the Caring for Subordinates Professionally sub-theme. The other one was under the Cared for the Mission Execution sub-theme. No significant differences between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ were identified for the Caring for Subordinates Personally sub-theme.

Significant differences between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ were identified for three of the 21 Recalled Behavior Responses. No significant differences between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ were identified for the remaining 19 of 21 responses to great bosses.

Specific statistical comparisons are presented below in accordance with each caring action theme and behavior response theme.

Cared for Subordinates Personally actions: T-tests comparing Group ≤3 and Group 4+. No significant differences were identified between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ for all 10 of the Cared for Subordinates Personally actions in this theme.

*Cared for Subordinates Professionally actions: T-tests comparing Group ≤3 and Group 4+.** Significant differences were identified between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ for four (4) of the 25 Cared for Subordinates Professionally actions. These caring actions and associated *t*-test statistics are found in Table 4.35. No significant differences were identified between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ for the remaining 21 of 25 caring actions in this sub-theme.
Table 4.35

Statistically Significant T-tests Comparing Group ≤3 and Group 4+ for Cared for Subordinates Professionally Actions (Group ≤3, N=112; Group 4+ N=114)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean Scores for Group ≤3/Group 4+</th>
<th>Independent-Samples t-Test Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss empowered me to do my job.</td>
<td>5.6785/5.8246</td>
<td>t(199)* = -2.341, p = .020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss saw performance potential in me.</td>
<td>5.6071/5.7544</td>
<td>t(215)* = -2.038, p = .043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss valued my professional abilities.</td>
<td>5.5536/5.7193</td>
<td>t(204)* = -1.997, p = .047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss asked my opinion.</td>
<td>5.5179/5.6930</td>
<td>t(214)* = -2.026, p = .044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Designates df number calculated to be less than the number of cases minus the number of groups. This was used because the group did not have equal variances. The df shown in the table has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Cared for the mission execution actions: T-tests comparing Group ≤3 and Group 4+. No significant differences were identified for 19 of the 19 Cared for Mission Execution caring actions in this sub-theme.

Cared for the empowering the unit actions: T-tests Comparing Group ≤3 and Group 4+. A significant difference was identified for one of the 13 Cared for Empowering the Unit caring actions. It and its associated t-Test results are located in Table 4.36. No significant differences were identified for the remaining 12 of the 13 caring actions in this sub-theme.

Table 4.36

Statistically Comparing Group ≤3 and Group 4+ for Cared for Empowering the Unit Caring Actions: (Group ≤3, N=112; Group 4+ N=114)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean Scores for Group ≤3/Group 4+</th>
<th>Independent-Samples t-Test Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss held informal forums to explain topics of interest to unit members.</td>
<td>5.06/5.32</td>
<td>t(224) = -2.319, p = .021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recalled behavior responses: Comparing Group \( \leq 3 \) and Group 4+. Significant differences were identified between Group \( \leq 3 \) and Group 4+ for three (3) of the 21 responses in this theme (Table 4.37). No significant differences between Group \( \leq 3 \) and Group 4+ were identified for the remaining 18 of 21 responses.

Table 4.37

Statistically Significant T-tests Comparing Group \( \leq 3 \) and Group 4+ for Recalled Behavior Responses. (Group \( \leq 3 \), N=112; Group 4+ N=114)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Action</th>
<th>Mean Scores for Group ( \leq 3 )/Group 4+</th>
<th>Independent-Samples t-Test Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My sense of loyalty to the unit</td>
<td>4.70/4.81</td>
<td>( t(203.559)^* = -2.400, p = .017 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of freedom in the job</td>
<td>4.64/4.82</td>
<td>( t(209.272)^* = 2.488, p = .014 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of freedom to bring bad news to my great bosses</td>
<td>4.32/4.55</td>
<td>( t(224)^* = -2.349, p = .020 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Designates df number calculated to be less than the number of cases minus the number of groups. It was determined because the group did not have equal variances. The df shown in the table has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Findings summary: Research question 5. Research Question 5 was: How do non-commissioned and commissioned officers compare in terms of how they describe caring leadership behaviors and their responses to caring leadership? And, how does a group of subordinates who said they had had either one or two or three great bosses compare with those that had four or more great bosses in terms of how they describe their great bosses’ caring actions and their behavior responses to those actions.

NCOs and officers have 13 caring actions with significant differences between the two groups and 54 caring actions which did not show a statistically significant difference. Table 4.38 shows the caring actions and responses that highlight differences between NCOs and officers.
Table 4.38

*Statistically Significant Differences between NCOs and Officers for Caring Actions and Recalled Behavior Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Actions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cared For Personally</td>
<td>• My great boss freed me up to take care of my family during a crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss supported me during a difficult time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cared For Professionally</td>
<td>• My great boss valued my professional abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss came to my work area to make sure all activities were smoothly being executed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss helped me understand my job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss spent time with me on job related issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss helped me understand how the Air Force works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss helped me through a difficult job related issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss periodically gave small awards (time off, plaque, atta-boys, etc.) for good performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cared For Mission Execution</td>
<td>• My great boss set high standards for himself and herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss personally came to my work area to make sure all activities were smoothly being executed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cared For Empowering the Unit</td>
<td>• My great boss held informal forums to explain topics of interest to unit members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss visited unit members at all hours in the work area to see how they were doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalled Behavior Responses</td>
<td>• No actions showed differences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group ≤3 and Group 4+ have 62 caring actions in common and five caring actions with statistically significant differences between the two groups. Table 4.39 shows the caring actions and responses that highlight differences between Group ≤3 and Group 4+. The difference between the two groups appears to be minimal.
Table 4.39

Statistically Significant Differences between Group ≤3 and Group 4+ for Caring Actions and Recalled Behavior Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Actions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cared For Personally</td>
<td>• No actions showed differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cared For Professionally</td>
<td>• My great boss empowered me to do my job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss saw performance potential in me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss valued my professional abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My great boss asked my opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cared For Mission Execution</td>
<td>• No actions showed differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cared For Empowering the Unit</td>
<td>• My great boss held informal forums to explain topics of interest to unit members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalled Behavior Responses</td>
<td>• No actions showed differences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, Group ≤3 and Group 4+ are very similar to each other and have minimal differences. However, the data suggest that NCOs and officers experienced some significant differences in the actions taken by their great bosses, with the largest differences arising under the Cared for Subordinates Professionally sub-theme. These differences could possibly be explained by pointing out that NCOs have NCOs and officers (and officer equivalent civilians) as bosses, whereas, officers only have other officers (and officer equivalent civilians) as bosses; officers cannot have NCOs as bosses. There may be a difference in the NCOs’ approach to leadership as compared with the officers’ approach to leadership. This difference in approach may be attributable to both the nature of the duties and responsibilities of NCOs and the officers, with the NCOs possibly tending to be more hands-on throughout the day in their engagement with their subordinates than officers; and to NCOs providing professional caring actions to all of their subordinates, who are also NCOs. Interestingly, in over 90% of the mean score comparisons between NCOs and officers, the NCO scores were higher than the officer scores.
Again, these differences may be attributable to the different roles NCOs and officers have in an organization as mentioned above.

**Overall Summary and Conclusions**

Figure 4.1, depicts the results of this research from a strategic perspective, showing the flow of caring actions from great bosses to subordinates and the subordinates’ responses to those great bosses. The research revealed four main areas in which Air Force bosses demonstrated care for their subordinates: Personally, Professionally, Mission Execution, and Empowering the Unit. The research addressed how subordinates responded when their great bosses cared for them.

![Diagram of Great Bosses’ Caring Actions](image)

*Figure 4.1. The flow of caring actions.*

There were a few—13 of 67 caring actions—statistically significant differences between the NCOs and officers. More than half (seven) of the 13 caring actions were in the Cared for Subordinate Professionally theme. There were also a few—5 of 67 caring actions—statistically significant differences between those respondents who had had three or fewer great bosses and
those that had four or more great bosses. Four of the five caring actions were in the Cared for the Subordinate Professionally theme.

The differences between the NCOs and the officers could be due to the nature of the NCOs’ duties as compared to the officers’. NCOs tend to perform in technician, hands-on roles, while officers are usually in a management type role and are less hands-on. One could surmise that a hands-on role creates more opportunities for caring than a less hands-on role.

Group $\leq 3$ and Group 4+ answered more similarly to each other than the NCOs and the officers. Significant differences between Group $\leq 3$ and Group 4+ were minimal and could be due to the mobility experienced by the Air Force retirees.

Regression analysis showed that $MotStrength$ variable that combined the motivating the unit and strengthening the unit categories significantly influenced Stronger Job Performance responses. Regression analysis also showed that the $MotStrength$ variable and the “praising my good performance,” and “helping with family crisis,” caring categories significantly influenced Stronger Relationship with Boss responses.

Additionally, response sub-themes Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss were highly correlated (.765). The presence of motivating the unit and strengthening the unit categories in the results of both regression analyses foretell the link between these two response sub-themes.

Eight actions correlated moderately with two or more responses and are shown in Table 4.40. The remaining 11 actions correlated moderately with only one or two behavior responses.
### Table 4.40

*Caring Actions Highly Correlated (≥ .400) with Two or More Recalled Behavior Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring Actions</th>
<th>My sense of trust in my great bosses increased</th>
<th>My performance level increased</th>
<th>My family’s sense of appreciation of my great bosses increased</th>
<th>My transparency in my communications with my great bosses increased</th>
<th>My sense of mission focus increased</th>
<th>My confidence in my job increased</th>
<th>My sense of freedom in my job increased</th>
<th>My sense of loyalty to the unit increased</th>
<th>My desire to make my great bosses’ vision a reality increased</th>
<th>My sense of belonging to the unit increased</th>
<th>My sense that family is a priority increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss bragged on my unit teammates</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss praised good performance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss was with the unit during difficult working conditions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss held informal forums to explain topics of interest to unit members</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss worked hard to get feedback from our customers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My great boss supported me during a difficult family time</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter V: Findings, Implications, and Conclusion

This chapter moves beyond the answers to the research questions and compares the research findings with existing literature to ascertain congruence or non-congruence between the two. Topics identified via the research, but which were not part of the answers to the research questions, are also presented. And, this chapter looks forward, addressing the implications of the findings for the Air Force, briefly addresses the research methodology, limitations, future research, and presents an overall conclusion.

Caring Actions Congruence with Key Literature

Generalized caring actions. The objective in Phase 2 of this research was to determine whether or not the caring leadership actions and responses identified in the 12 Phase 1 interviews could be generalized over a larger Air Force population of at least 200 retirees. The research findings indicated that over 95% of the survey participants agreed at some level (*mildly agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed*) that their great bosses demonstrated all 67 caring actions toward them. To prevent conclusion inflation, the researcher applied the criteria of 70% of the participants *strongly agreed* to each caring action to qualify it to be considered a commonly observed action by their great bosses. The researcher concluded that the 226 participants in the survey generally stated that the following 15 actions are considered as statements about caring actions can be generalized over a larger Air Force retiree population:

- “My great boss freed me up to take care of my family during a family crisis.”
- “My great boss helped me improve myself.”
- “My great boss took time to get to know me personally.”
- “My great boss trusted my abilities to handle a difficult job.”
- “My great boss empowered me to do my job.”
• “My great boss saw performance potential in me.”
• “My great boss took the unit’s mission seriously.”
• “My great boss set high standards for himself or herself.”
• “My great boss personally lived up to high mission execution standards.”
• “My great boss ensured that mission related activities were accomplished correctly.”
• “My great boss endeavored to improve mission execution.”
• “My great boss had the unit’s back.”
• “My great boss supported the unit when speaking with outside agencies.”
• “My great boss was positive about the unit and its members performance.”
• “My great boss praised good performance.”

**Literature that speaks to caring.** Mayeroff (1965) discussed care, how it was not temporal, how it has a “long-term development perspective much like how friendship and trust are created and the deepening of a relationship” (p. 462). The actions listed above based on this study, all indicate a long-term perspective motivating and strengthening the unit as well as the boss caring for the subordinates and caring for the mission. For example, Mayeroff (1971) stated that caring for another person “in the most significant sense, is to help him grow and actualize himself” (p. 1). Actions such as, “helped me improve myself,” “took time to get to know me personally,” “trusted my abilities to handle a difficult job,” “empowered me to do my job,” and “saw performance potential in me,” contribute directly to a subordinate’s growth and actualization. Given that the subordinate is part of a unit and has a relationship with the boss, the caring actions taken by the boss towards the unit help the subordinate to grow and actualize him or herself.
Noddings (1984) differentiates between “caring about” where a person has concerns or feelings about a person’s state and “caring for” where a person acts on those concerns and performs actions that the other can actually feel, witness, and respond to. Kouzes and Posner (2012) spoke about caring leaders as those who show personalized attention, being physically present with subordinates demonstrating that the leader is not only present but also who “support the subordinates and is there for them” (p. 319).

Gabriel’s (2015) description of caring leaders was that “they treat subordinates with “consideration and respect” (p. 324). Caring leaders are willing to go beyond the call of duty in dispatching their responsibilities, “to go the extra mile to meet subordinates’ needs and ensure that they flourish” (Gabriel, 2015, p. 316). Caring leaders fight to defend those for whom they care, rather than opt for easy and convenient compromises (Gabriel, 2008). Caring means taking “responsibilities for others and being prepared to take personal risks in discharging such responsibilities” (Gabriel, 2015, p. 325).

Goffee and Jones (2000) addressed caring leaders by saying that authentic caring leaders “empathize with their subordinates” (p. 62). These caring leaders also ensure their subordinates have the tools and resources and support they need to achieve their best (Goffee & Jones, 2000). Ciulla (2009) said that caring leaders are “present and visible” (p. 3). Kahn (1993) provided statements that were more specific about caring. He identified the following caring behaviors:

- In the other’s vicinity; staying with the other person; not allow[ing] external interruption;
- . . . communicate positive regard, respect, and appreciation;
- . . . show[ing] emotional presence by displaying warmth, affection, and kindness and . . . provid[ing] ongoing steady stream of resources and physical/emotional/cognitive presence for others. (p. 546)

Kroth and Keeler (2009) wrote that relative to caring behavior, examples of care-giver behaviors are:

- Is emotionally accessible; pays attention; shows interest in the employee; accepts the employee; remains open to ideas, possibilities (is open minded); empathizes; puts
employee plans and goals ahead of his or her own; advocates for the employee; committed to employee success; protects employees; seeks opportunities for advancing employees; informs employees; facilitates problem solving; gives generative feedback; encourages employees; believes in employees; teaches and mentors employees . . . develops relationships of mutual trust and obligation. (p. 522)

Van der Vyver et al. (2014) present the following caring leadership actions:

Displaying interest in a person by showing sympathy or empathy; paying attention to the person; showing compassion, respect, and acceptance of others; providing a safe working environment; displaying appropriate conduct and behavior of a leader; providing needed resources; and creating and providing trust, empowerment, accessibility, commitment, leader effectiveness, consistency, staff development, and transformative influence. (p. 2)

Edge et al. (2016) described caring leadership actions as leaders supporting and understanding; leader approachability; leader knowledge of teacher personal lives; and teacher modeling of balance between work and life.

The most specific descriptions of caring actions are found in the Army publications. The Headquarters Department of the Army (2015) identifies the following list of actions for Army leaders to take to care for soldiers:

Ensure subordinates and their families’ health, welfare, and development are provided for; monitor morale and encourage honest feedback; set a personal example for colleagues; understand and nurture individual subordinates’ intrinsic motivators; tell a subordinate to go home when they have been working long hours; and give subordinates time off during the workday to take care of family matters. (p. 7-35)

Woodruff (2005) argued that caring leaders must: consider families as part of the organization versus a distraction from it. They need to:

Seek to identify new ways to increase spousal satisfaction with military life; train subordinate leaders in family support, model these practices, and evaluate their success; allow families as much control over their situation and time as possible; provide a predictable schedule so families can schedule/accommodate activities, planned and unplanned; do not waste soldiers’ time; listen to families’ problems; take a real interest in families’ wellbeing, respect soldiers and their families; target and provide special attention to high-risk families such as young families, single parents, and families new to the military; provide unit activities that inform soldiers and spouses about family programs in the unit and elsewhere; recognize when extra time at work may actually degrade performance if it results in excessive time away from families; communicate
with spouses and act as advocate for families, provide quality sponsorship to new soldiers and allow new soldiers time to get their families settled. (pp. 35–36)

**Implications of findings with literature that speaks to caring actions.** This comparison suggests a congruence between the 11 caring actions identified here as listed above, and Mayeroff’s (1971) views on caring. To the researcher, the 11 caring actions appear to take a long-term view of engaging and developing subordinates and the mission for their betterment and success. The findings also suggest a congruence between Noddings’ (1984) definition of “caring for” and the caring actions identified through this research. To the researcher, the 11 caring actions reflect specific actions taken by the caregiver for the benefit of the subordinates or the mission.

The caring leadership actions mentioned above include a wide gamut of actions a leader can take to demonstrate care for subordinates. Some of the actions are very broad and several could fit well within the more abstract statements on caring identified in literature. The caring actions articulated in literature and the caring actions identified through this research are in congruence. The caring actions identified through the research do add a deeper level of specificity to the information contained in reviewed literature.

**Behavior Responses: Congruence with Key Literature**

**Generalized behavior responses to caring actions.** The research findings also indicate that over 70% of the survey participants stated they recalled responding to their great bosses with an increase in key behavior responses at some level (somewhat increased or increased). To prevent conclusion inflation, the researcher applied the criteria that at least 70% of the participants had to say that a key response to a great boss had increased for that response to be considered common. The researcher concluded, based on responses of 226 participants in the survey, that the following 11 responses can be generalized over a larger Air Force population:
• “My desire to work hard increased.”
• “My sense of belonging to the unit increased.”
• “My sense of loyalty to the unit increased.”
• “My desire to treat my subordinates the same way my great bosses treated me increased.”
• “My performance level increased.”
• “My sense of freedom in my job increased.”
• “My sense of trust in my great bosses increased.”
• “My willingness to follow my great bosses increased.”
• “My desire to prevent my great bosses from looking bad increased.”
• “My desire to exceed my great bosses’ expectations increased.”
• “My desire to make my bosses’ vision a reality increased.”

**Literature that speaks to behavior responses to caring actions.** Only a small number of articles address impacts or responses to caring. Kahn (1993) identified a variety of responses to or impacts felt from caring actions:

> Allows relationship to caregiving to commence, communicates to others the sense of being valued and valuable, worth caring for and appreciated, other person feels . . . held by and within by the caregiver’s affection, and loved, and builds trust with the other that knowing that their own needs will be met in steady, predictable ways. (pp. 545–546)

Kroth and Keeler (2009) stated that organizational caring behaviors contribute “to desired employee outcomes such as productivity, retention, organizational citizenship behavior, and job performance” (p. 523). Edge et al. (2016) stated that teachers’ motivation and wellbeing are linked to leaders’ support of work/life balance and acknowledging that teachers have lives outside of school” (p. 7). Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated that showing subordinates that they are cared for and valued motivated subordinates to work harder for the company.
Implications of findings with literature that speaks to behavior responses to caring actions. To repeat, there was scarce literature located that specifically addressed responses to caring actions. The responses that were discussed are very broad and offered few specifics. The responses identified in this research provide much more specific insight into responses that are linked to caring leadership.

In order to obtain more understanding of the responses to caring leadership, the researcher drew upon Deci and Ryan (2008) for additional insight. In their discussion of self-determination theory, Deci and Ryan (2008) point out that “when people are autonomously motivated, they experience volition, or a self-endorsement of their actions” (p. 182). However, when people experienced, controlled motivation, their behavior is a function of external contingencies of reward or punishment, and they are energized by factors such as an approval motive, avoidance of shame, contingent self-esteem, and ego-involvements. When people are controlled, they experience pressure to think, feel, or behave in particular ways. (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 182)

The research about responses to caring does not indicate any pressure being placed on the subordinates to respond in a particular manner. It does seem to suggest that the responses to great bosses generate autonomous motivation where the subordinates, due to the caring actions of the bosses, identified with the value of the mission and integrated it into their sense of self, thereby “yielding greater psychological health and more effective performance on heuristic types of activities and long term persistence in achieving healthier behaviors” (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 183) in the context of accomplishing the mission.

Findings’ Implications for the Air Force

The findings suggest that there are four areas or sub-themes of caring actions that potentially influenced Air Force retirees’ behavior responses: Cared for Subordinates Personally, Cared for Subordinates Professionally, Cared for the Mission with a Focus on Mission
Execution, and Cared for the Mission with a Focus on Empowering the Unit. From a perspective of organizational behavior, Air Force leaders could benefit by becoming familiar with all four areas and in particular, the last three. Sub-themes, Cared for Subordinates Professionally, Cared for the Mission with a Focus on Execution, and Cared for the Mission with a Focus on Empowering the Unit, are particularly noteworthy because the research suggests that they contain caring actions that have a potential strong relationship with the Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss responses. Understanding these three areas, the associated caring actions, and the influence they potentially have on subordinates, could make a significant impact upon an organization. The regression analysis and the correlation analysis in Chapter IV show that caring actions focused on subordinates and focused on the mission worked together to potentially influence both Stronger Job Performance responses and Stronger Relationship with Boss responses.

In Chapter III, the researcher defined flourishing as having salvation, integrity, wholeness (or completeness), blessedness, well-being (including reconciliation and justice and peace), unity and community, connectedness, physical and material prosperity (including health and contentment), and moral or ethical straightforwardness (Pennington, 2015; Rogers et al., 2008; Whelchel, 2013). The responses identified in Chapter IV can be seen as specific examples or products of flourishing as experienced by the participants and are certainly congruent with efforts to help subordinates successfully accomplish a mission. The findings suggest a potentially strong relationship exists between the caring actions and the recalled behavior responses.

As stated above, the Air Force’s focus is on conducting combat operations, that is, to fly, fight, and win, and on accomplishing the mission, even if great risks must be taken and personal sacrifices must be made (Department of the Air Force, 2014a). This sense of mission and
sacrifice is reflected in the non-combat environment in the Air Force as well. The researcher did not find literature that addressed how Air Force personnel or organizations were to be developed or how to prepare to accomplish the mission under combat or non-combat circumstances. The necessity for trust between leaders and subordinates is discussed by Mayeroff (1965), Pfaff (1998), and Sweeney et al. (2009), but the researcher did not find sufficient information that might guide a young Air Force officer in building trust between himself or herself and his or her subordinates. The lack of these topics creates a gap in literature and an opportunity for these research findings to assist in filling that gap.

The present research identified specific caring actions that correlated moderately with the response “my sense of trust in my great boss increased”: “praised good performance” (.438), “visited members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing” (.433), “bragged on unit teammates” (.424), and “was with the unit during difficult working conditions” (.412). These four caring actions are in the motivated the unit caring category. The regression analysis showed motivating and strengthening the unit influenced the Stronger Job Performance as well as the Stronger Relationship with Boss recalled response behavior sub-themes. In the military, trust between a boss and subordinate is needed when either is in potentially life-threatening mission. (Pfaff, 1998; Sweeney et al., 2009).

According to Bennis and Goldsmith (2013), leaders owe followers the opportunity to be proud of the place they work (as cited by Pellicer, 2007, p. 137). Goleman, Boyatzis, and Mckee (2002), in a study of 19 insurance companies, found that “roughly 50 to 70 percent of how employees perceive their organization’s climate can be traced to one person: the leader” (pp. 17–18). More than anyone else, the boss creates the conditions that directly determine subordinates’ abilities to work well. Leaders who care for their organizations build organizations
where their subordinates are highly motivated, contribute their best to executing the organization’s mission, and strive to improve the overall organization (Pellicer, 2007). “Caring makes it possible for leaders to build organizations where employees are fully engaged in their work, resulting in not only stronger, more productive organizations, but also in happier, healthier human beings with a better quality of life” (Pellicer, 2007, p. 33). The research findings described here indicate that participants’ responses are similar in nature to those in the organization born from the caring that Pellicer described.

The findings also identified 19 caring actions that could possibly contribute to subordinates’ recalled behavior responses (11 total) and which could lead to highly productive and engaging organization that subordinates could possibly be proud of and which could potentially enable successful mission accomplishment and a highly engaged productive organization. Figure 5.1 depicts these caring actions, the responses with which the actions have a high correlation, and the potential organizational and personal results the responses possibly enable. From the researcher’s positionality, the findings imply that caring actions focused on subordinates and focused on the mission, influenced the recalled behavior responses (key attitudes, behaviors, and performance) identified in the Stronger Job Performance and Stronger Relationship with Boss response sub-themes. And again drawing from the researcher’s positionality, Air Force leaders would consider these responses to be characteristic of a highly engaged and productive organization that is focused on mission accomplishment, and these leaders would want their organizations to be characterized in this manner.
Figure 5.1. Caring actions correlated with recalled behavior responses. These potentially enable mission accomplishment and lead to engaged and productive organizations.
The research indicates that caring leadership actions are potentially good for subordinates, good for organizations, and good for mission accomplishment. Unfortunately, the literature review did not identify how caring leadership and its subsequent actions are developed for the good of the organization. A possible answer to how caring leadership could be developed in the Air Force potentially lies with the discussion in Chapter II about caring leadership being a virtue.

Chapter II discussed caring leadership as a potential virtue and presents Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) criteria of what virtues are: a virtue is the median between two vices; a virtue focuses on the flourishing of the subject or subjects; and a virtue is situationally dependent.

The analysis in Chapter IV supports caring leadership being a virtue. The research shows that caring leadership meets Aristotle’s first condition. The boss is not solely focusing on the two extremes of mission success or the subordinates’ happiness, at the expense of the other. The boss is focusing on both mission accomplishment and the improvement of the subordinate(s) simultaneously. At the heart of the caring actions identified in Figure 5.1 is a focus on accomplishing the mission; both the boss and the subordinates are pursuing accomplishing the mission together. The leader, in taking these caring actions, is attending to the subordinates, either collectively as a unit or specifically as individual persons, for their betterment—to help them flourish within the organizational environment.

Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) second criteria for a virtue is to focus on the flourishing of the subjects. Clearly, the caring actions identified in this research demonstrate the leader’s focus on the flourishing of the subordinates and the success of the mission. Actions such as “helping the subordinate perform at a high level in his or her job,” “helping the subordinate recover from a
mistake,” and “giving the subordinate more responsibilities as his or her abilities grew” are indicative of helping a subordinate flourish.

Aristotle’s (trans. 2009) third criteria of a virtue is that it is situationally dependent. The research points to meeting this condition as well. The situation that brought the leader and the subordinate together provides the opportunity to pursue the successful accomplishment of the mission and provides the opportunity for the leader to help the subordinate flourish. The situations identified through this research are experiences with great bosses the survey participants reflected upon. Therefore, the findings of this study support caring leadership being a virtue.

If caring leadership can be considered a virtue, then the leader’s caring actions do not emanate from rote memory but come from within the leader. The question then is how is virtuous caring leadership shaped within the leader? The answer lies within the following statements from the literature:

- “Would-be leaders need to see how the required special virtues are instantiated by those who are effective at leadership. Only then will they learn how to effectively habituate these virtues into their own lives” (Pfaff 1998, p. 56).
- “Virtue is habit; it requires ongoing, constant, and repetitive exercise” (Gini & Green, 2013, p. 1).
- “The moral virtues, or excellences of character, can be cultivated by habituation and the intellectual virtues by systematic teaching and training and the intellectual virtues by systematic teaching and training” (Begley, 2006, p. 259).
- “Students acquire excellences of character and intelligence through example, the

These statements point to the need for emerging leaders to have mentors who can guide them in growing in virtue. And in considering caring leadership as a virtue, it is through habituation of caring actions that a leader takes on the virtuous habits needed to care for subordinates and care for the mission.

The Air Force might consider a leadership development program that fosters caring leadership. The goal would be to grow leaders who authentically and simultaneously care for subordinates’ flourishing and the mission’s success. Building upon the research in this dissertation, caring actions can be addressed in one of the four groups mentioned above: Caring for Subordinates Personally and Professionally and Caring for the Mission with a Focus on Mission Execution and with a Focus on Empowering the Unit. Caring actions should be focused in these four areas because it is right to do so, without an ulterior motive of attempting to increase subordinates’ performance solely to achieve mission success. If emphasis is on teaching leaders how to efficiently execute caring actions to gain higher mission performance from subordinates, then this would violate the authentic leadership component of caring leadership discussed in Chapter II. This will then result in failing to develop caring leaders but in actuality creating inauthentic leaders who subordinates can easily spot and turn from.

Other Research Findings

Lack of overlap between sets of caring actions. Interesting to note is the lack of overlap between the caring actions that are highly correlated with recalled behavior responses ($\geq .400$) and caring actions that received a strongly agree score ($\geq 70\%$). The research identified 67 caring actions by great bosses and 21 responses to the great bosses that displayed these caring actions.
The correlation matrix between the actions and the responses showed that 19 caring actions were highly correlated with 11 responses. Yet, of those 19 actions, only three received a strongly agree score of ≥70%. These were: “my great boss praised good performance,” “my great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance,” and “my great boss supported the unit when talking with outside agencies.”

Of course, correlation is not causation. However, given the strong correlational relationships between the 19 caring action and the 11 responses, one might conclude that if an organization understood these relationships, then it would sincerely foster all 19 caring actions in such ways that these actions would occur more frequently, potentially maximizing all 11 responses.

**Impact of empowering the unit.** The research identified 13 caring actions under the Cared for the Mission theme. In conducting the analysis, the researcher noted that nine of the 13 actions were actually part of the Empowering the Unit sub-theme, and they involved direct engagement by the boss with the Air Force unit and demonstrated care shown by the boss to the unit. The researcher noted that when these caring actions were demonstrated to the unit as a whole, they were also demonstrated to the unit’s personnel. The implication is that though the boss may not show care to all members of the unit on a personal basis, the personnel in the unit felt cared for because of the actions the boss took to empower the unit. Leaders in the Air Force should appreciate the potential positive influence they have on individual subordinates when they care for the unit by taking the actions within the by empowering the unit category. Again from a training perspective, Air Force leaders could be taught how to empower their units and therefore care for their personnel with a potential expectation that their subordinates could be put on a path to flourishing and the mission could be put on a path to success.
Five Ts: Time, turf, topic, tribute (and praise), and take action. As the researcher listened to the interviewees recount their stories of how their great bosses cared for them and cared for the mission, it became obvious that virtually every story had elements of time, turf, topic, tribute (and praise) and take action, in the explanation of the bosses’ caring for the subordinate. The researcher refers to these five elements as the “five Ts.”

**Time.** This element is about the boss dedicating specific time to subordinates. Time to listen to the subordinate; time to discuss things; or time to focus on a topic of interest to the subordinate; and “visiting subordinates at all hours of the night.” Subordinates know the boss is busy, and they appreciate when the boss takes time out of his or her busy day to engage them individually or collectively.

**Turf.** Turf refers to the subordinates’ space or work area. This element highlights the boss meeting the subordinate where the subordinate is, in his or her space or work area—not the boss’s office or surroundings. This element signals to subordinates that the boss cares enough to come to them, to meet them where they are, versus having them come to the boss. This element says to the subordinate that he or she is so important to the boss that the boss deliberately and physically leaves their own office to come to the subordinate’s work area to meet with them.

**Topic.** This element represents the idea that the boss engages the subordinate on a subject or topic (such as the subordinate’s family or mission or job) that is important to the subordinate. This topic is not about the boss; it is about the subordinate. Examples are: “did your son get accepted into the college he wanted?”, “come on let’s go to the flight line and see your troops,” and “tell me where we went wrong.” Here the boss’s actions say to the subordinate that nothing is more important to the boss at that point in time than the topic important to the subordinate.
**Tribute (and praise).** Several of the caring actions with $\geq 0.400$ correlation coefficient with responses speak of the boss “bragging” on the subordinates, praising the “good performance” of the subordinate or the unit, and giving “atta-boys” for good performance. The correlation between this “T” and responses is significant. This “T” was identified as a significant independent variable in the multiple regression models found in Tables 4.26 and 4.27. This “T” tells the subordinate that he or she is in congruence with the boss. It builds the subordinate’s confidence to continue taking the actions he or she is already taking.

**Take action.** Noddings (1984) addressed the difference between caring about someone (having the motivation or concern but not necessarily taking action) and caring for someone (going beyond the concern and actually taking action). Clearly, taking action demonstrates to subordinates the importance or value a leader places on the subordinate or the mission. A leader may feel concern for a subordinate, but not until the leader takes action will the subordinate feel the concern or the care the leader has toward him or her. In this regard, to care for should be considered an action verb phrase. Taking action demonstrates to the subordinate the boss’s real and direct concern for the subordinates’ flourishing and or the mission’s success. Examples from the interviews of taking action are “bragging on a subordinate,” ensuring the unit has the “resources it needs,” “helping a subordinate recover from a mistake,” and “helping during a family crisis.”

**Limitations/Issues**

Though a considerable amount of this dissertation was dedicated to building a basic understanding of caring (see Chapter II), the key components were the subordinates’ characterization of caring actions as demonstrated by great bosses and the subordinates’ self-described responses to those actions. As the recipient of the leaders’ actions, the
subordinates have a unique vantage point from which to identify the actions that successfully communicated that the great bosses cared for the subordinate and the mission, and, of course, to describe how they responded to those bosses. The two-part methodology of first, interviewing a small representative sample of the participants, and second, executing the survey across the broader population to ascertain if the interview findings were generalizable and could be applicable in many situations to determine what subordinates think about a variety of topics. Situations such as identifying subordinates’ needs and wants and identifying an organization’s strengths and weaknesses are two examples of this type of research approach.

Though the participants addressed individual bosses in the conduct of the interview, the survey was written in such a way that participants possibly aggregated their great bosses and responded accordingly. However, the purpose of this dissertation and research was not to define the most caring or greatest boss; it was to identify the caring actions that a group of Air Force retirees would agree they had experienced from their great bosses. These actions became how Air Force retirees characterized caring leadership actions.

Two responses—“my sense of belonging to the unit” and “my sense of loyalty to the unit”—did not fit perfectly in either Stronger Job Performance or in Stronger Relationship with Boss. The researcher felt these responses fit better in Stronger Job Performance. They could possibly have become a third response category entitled Self Determination Responses (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

In Chapter IV, it was noted that there was very little difference between the responses of the participants in Group ≤3 and the Group 4+. This could possibly be explained due to the mobility of the participants when they were on active duty and to the mobility of their bosses.
The mobility generated more opportunities for great bosses with some participants than with others.

**Future Research**

As mentioned in Chapter III, the number of female Air Force retiree participants, both NCOs and Commissioned officers, who participated in the survey was not sufficient to conduct a thorough analysis of female retiree perspectives. Future analysis should attempt to include a sufficient number of females to fully comprehend females’ contribution to caring leadership research.

In the course of the research, it became apparent that some participants wished they had experienced certain caring actions more than they had while on active duty. Future research could include questions asking which caring actions the subordinates wished they had experienced more of from their bosses.

Though the Air Force has a hierarchal rank structure and Air Force instructions focus a great deal of attention on mission accomplishment, this research shows the power that caring leadership has in potentially increasing subordinates’ job performance and relationship with boss responses. Clearly the Air Force environment is very different than the civilian environment. The Air Force environment includes risk of life, 24-hour duty, and a very structured organizational hierarchy, all of which are distinct from the private sector. Because of this unique environment, it can be surmised that some caring actions and responses may only apply to the Air Force (or another military environment). However, the researcher believes that it is possible that many actions that characterize care and responses to great bosses as discussed in Chapter IV could be common within the civilian sector. To ascertain applicability of caring leadership as experienced in the Air Force to other sectors of society that are not military, I suggest similar mixed methods
research projects could focus on education, corporate management, and health care environments. The findings from this future research, if in congruence with my research, could very well further substantiate the existence of caring leadership as a type of leadership much like transformational, relational, servant, or authentic leadership.

Empirical research could be conducted to ascertain the veracity of the researcher’s observations about the Five T’s of time, turf, topic, tribute (and praise) and take action. This could be accomplished to determine if these topics, when joined together in this manner, have value to emerging leaders and social scientists.

In the introduction to this dissertation, the researcher noted the possibility of three combinations of caring focus on people (subordinates) and mission in addition to High people-High mission. They are: Low people-Low mission, Low people-High mission, and High people-Low mission. Future research could investigate the impacts these three combinations have on subordinates’ flourishing and mission success.

**Conclusion/Personal Note**

The research was quite humbling. In my Air Force career, I have worked for some great bosses, and I have worked for some who were not as great. I have endeavored to mimic the great ones and have tried to avoid the leadership mistakes made by my other bosses. But, as I was conducting the interviews and listening to the responses, I was struck with the depth of the leadership abilities possessed by the great bosses the interviewees were discussing. The great bosses clearly cared for their subordinates, team, and the mission. Their actions could have only come from leaders who had hearts for helping their subordinates flourish and helping the mission succeed.
As I reflect back upon my early leadership opportunities in college and when I was much younger in my Air Force career, leadership was about vision and being a nice guy and convincing people to do what I wanted, and occasionally helping someone. Based upon what I know now, I wish I had been motivated more from a virtuous caring perspective. I wish I had possessed those same caring leadership skills mentioned above because I would like to think I would have helped my subordinates flourish and would have helped them pursue mission success because it was right to do so rather than focusing strictly on being successful in the job. As I progress forward in my professional career, fulfill my duties at church, and engage and mentor young leaders, my goal is to pass on the pursuit of caring leadership to the next generation of emerging leaders so that they are more prepared to lead than I was at the outset of my career.
Appendix
Appendix A: Initial Recruitment Letter—Phase 1 Interviews

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study
Entitled
High People–High Mission:
The Power of Caring Leadership as Experienced in the Air Force

Dear Air Force Retiree

My name is Winfield Tufts. I am an Air Force retiree and a PhD Candidate in the Antioch University PhD in Leadership and Change Program. For my dissertation, I am studying positive leadership topics from subordinates' perspectives that they experienced while on active duty in the Air Force. Subordinates' perspectives are key to this study because subordinates are the receivers of their leaders' actions. I believe there are some very positive but understudied leadership topics that this study could illuminate and could possibly contribute to a variety of leadership development programs in the military, education, healthcare, and corporate management. Your participation in this project will contribute to understanding these positive topics.

The study will consist of two phases. Phase 1 will consist of participating in interviews, and Phase 2 will consist of answering a survey. Information gathered in both phases will be based on Air Force members' experiences and perspectives as subordinates while on active duty.

Please consider participating in this worthwhile endeavor. Please e-mail me at [redacted] or call me at [redacted] for further information.

All the best

Winfield Tufts
PhD Candidate, Antioch University
Appendix B: Follow-Up Recruitment Letter—Phase 1 Interviews

Dear (Title/Name),

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study entitled "High People—High Mission: The Power of Caring Leadership as Experienced in the Air Force". As you might recall, I am studying positive leadership topics from subordinates' perspectives that they experienced while on active duty in the Air Force. Subordinates' perspectives are key to this study because subordinates are the receivers of their leaders' actions. I believe there are some very positive but understudied leadership topics that this study could illuminate and could possibly contribute to a variety of leadership development programs in the military, education, healthcare, and corporate management.

I am currently gathering names of retirees who are willing to be interviewed as part of this study. Pertinent details regarding the interview process follow below:
- Your participation in this study is purely voluntary and should only involve about an hour for the interview.
- I will ask you to reflect back upon your Air Force career and discuss positive topics of leadership you experienced as a subordinate.
- The interview will be conducted in a guided conversational manner, and I have a few basic questions to guide the interview. I may have a follow-up question, so I may request an additional very short interview in the future.
- I will record the interview (portions will be transcribed), and I will take notes; these will all be destroyed when the study is completed. I will not use your name in the study; if I need to refer to a comment given by you, I will use a pseudonym in place of your name. I will be the only person that knows you participated in this study.
- You may decline to continue with the study now, or you may opt out of the study at any time with no repercussions.
- Your consent to be interviewed will be documented via an informed consent form. A copy of that consent form is attached for you review.

Please let me know how I may call you so I can answer any questions you might have, and so we can make the final arrangements for the interview.

Again, thank you very much for your interest in this study.

All the best,

Winfield Tufts
PhD Candidate, Antioch University
Appendix C: Informed Consent Form—Phase 1 Interviews

Informed Consent Form

This informed consent form is for Air Force retirees who I am inviting to participate in a research project titled "High People -- High Mission: The Power of Caring Leadership as Experienced in the Air Force".

Name of Principle Investigator: Winfield Tufts
Name of Organization: Antioch University, PhD in Leadership and Change Program
Name of Project: High People -- High Mission: The Power of Caring Leadership as Experienced in the Air Force

You will be given a copy of this full Informed Consent Form

Introduction
My name is Winfield Tufts, and I am a PhD candidate in the PhD in Leadership and Change Program at Antioch University. As part of this degree, I am completing a project which studies positive leadership topics from subordinates' perspectives that they experienced while on active duty in the Air Force. I am going to give you information about the study and invite you to be part of this research. You may talk to anyone you feel comfortable talking with about the research, and take time to reflect on whether you want to participate or not. You may ask questions at any time.

Purpose of this research project
The purpose of this project is to gather subordinates’ perspectives on positive leadership topics since subordinates are the receivers of their leaders’ actions. I believe there are some very positive but understudied leadership topics that this study could illuminate and could possibly contribute to a variety of leadership development programs in the military, education, healthcare, and corporate management. Your participation in this project will contribute to understanding these positive topics.

Type of Research Intervention
This research will involve your participation in an interview and possibly a follow-up interview. Each interview will be tape recorded solely for research purposes; portions will be transcribed, and I will take notes. I will not use your name in the study; if I need to refer to a comment given by you, I will use a pseudonym in place of your name. I will be the only person that knows you participated in this study. All of your contributions to this study and any other information that may connect you to the study, will be kept in a locked, secure location and destroyed when the project is completed. The interview should last about an hour.

Participant Selection
You are being invited to take part in this research because you are an Air Force retiree with over 20 years of service. You should not consider participation in this research if you retired before serving 20 years.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate. You will not be penalized for your decision not to participate or for any part of your contribution during the
study. You may withdraw from this study at any time. If an interview has already taken place, the information you provided will not be used in the research study.

Risks
No study is completely risk free. However, I do not anticipate that you will be harmed or distressed during this study. You may stop being in the study at any time if you become uncomfortable. If you experience any discomfort as a result of your participation, please let me know immediately, and I will contact Antioch University officials for assistance.

Benefits
There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation may help others in the future.

Reimbursements
You will not be provided any monetary incentive to take part in this research project.

Confidentiality
All information will be de-identified, so that it cannot be connected back to you. Your real name will be replaced with a pseudonym in the write-up of this project, and only the primary researcher will have access to the list connecting your name to the pseudonym. This list, along with tape recordings of the discussion sessions, any transcripts, and any notes will be kept in a secure, locked location and destroyed upon completion of the study.

Limits of Privacy Confidentiality
Generally speaking, I can assure you that I will keep everything you tell me or do for the study private. Yet there are times where I cannot keep things private (confidential). The researcher cannot keep things private (confidential) when:

- The researcher finds out that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused.
- The researcher finds out that that a person plans to hurt him or herself, such as commit suicide.
- The researcher finds out that a person plans to hurt someone else

There are laws that require many professionals to take action if they think a person is at risk for self-harm or are self-harming, harming another or if a child or adult is being abused. In addition, there are guidelines that researchers must follow to make sure all people are treated with respect and kept safe. In most states, there is a government agency that must be told if someone is being abused or plans to self-harm or harm another person. Please ask any questions you may have about this issue before agreeing to be in the study. It is important that you do not feel betrayed if it turns out that the researcher cannot keep some things private.

Future Publication
The primary researcher, Winfield Tufts, reserves the right to include any results of this study in future scholarly presentations and/or publications. All information will be de-identified prior to publication.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without your job being affected.

Who to Contact
If you have any questions, you may ask them now or later. If you have questions, you may contact Winfield Tufts at [contact information].

If you have any ethical concerns about this study, please contact Lisa Kreeger, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Antioch University Ph.D. in Leadership and Change, Email: [contact information].

The research study proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Antioch Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected. If you wish to find out more about the IRB, contact Dr. Lisa Kreeger.

DO YOU WISH TO BE IN THIS STUDY?
I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and, any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant_____________________________

Signature of Participant_____________________________

Date ____________________
Day/month/year

DO YOU CONSENT TO BE AUDIOTAPED IN THIS STUDY?
I voluntarily agree to let the researcher audiotape me for this study. I agree to allow the use of my recordings as described in this form.

Print Name of Participant_____________________________

Signature of Participant_____________________________

Date ____________________
Day/month/year

To be filled out by the researcher or the person taking consent:

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent
has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent ________________________________

Signature of Researcher/person taking the consent ________________________________

Date ________________________________
    Day/month/year
Appendix D: E-Mail Recruitment Letter—Phase 2 Survey

Dear Fellow Retiree,

One of the hallmarks of our Air Force careers is the opportunities we had to work with great leaders while we were on active duty. As a PhD candidate in Antioch University’s PhD in Leadership and Change program, I am studying great Air Force bosses and attempting to characterize what distinguishes the great bosses from the good and not so good bosses.

The below link takes you to a survey that will ask you several questions about the great bosses you served under while in the Air Force. The survey will also ask you questions regarding how you responded to your great bosses.

Your answers to the survey have the potential to impact leadership development programs in the Air Force, in the corporate world, in healthcare, and in education.

Please take the survey by 15 June 2017.

Thank you very much
v/r

Winfield Tufts
2006 Air Force Retiree
Appendix E: Survey—Phase 2

1. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to take this survey. I am Winfield Tufts; I retired from the Air Force in 2006. I am a PhD candidate enrolled in Antioch University's PhD in Leadership and Change Program. My dissertation is entitled “High People – High Mission: The Power of Caring Leadership as Experienced in the Air Force”, and the research conducted through this survey supports this dissertation.

The overall objective of this research is to characterize caring leadership and to identify how subordinates respond to caring leadership. This survey will (1) identify the actions your great bosses took that demonstrated to you they cared about and for you and the mission simultaneously and (2) capture how you responded to those actions taken by your great bosses.

You are invited to participate in the study because you are an Air Force retiree; your many years on active duty produced great experiences with many different bosses. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you will not be coerced into taking the survey nor will you be compensated for taking the survey. You may ignore this invitation or exit from the survey at any time. And, if you are not an Air Force retiree, please do not complete the survey.

No study is completely risk free. However, this is an anonymous survey, and no personal information will be collected, therefore, I do not anticipate that you will be harmed or distressed by responding to the survey questions.

Your answers to the questions in the survey have the potential to shape leadership development programs in the future. Information gathered through this survey may be used for publication at a later date. Since no names or personal identifying information will be gathered via the survey, no names or personal information will be identified in the survey report.

If you have any ethical concerns about this survey, please contact Lisa Kreeger, PhD, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Antioch University Ph.D. in Leadership and Change, Email: [email]

By clicking “next” below, you are indicating that you have read and understand this consent form and agree to participate in this project. Please print a copy of this page for your records.

Thank you again for your participation.
Winfield Tufts
Research Principal Investigator
### 2. Retired Air Force Status

* **1. Are you an Air Force retiree?**
  - [ ] Yes–please continue.
  - [ ] No–please stop and thank you for considering this survey.

* **2. Did you retire as a Non-Commissioned Officer or a Commissioned Officer?**
  - [ ] Non-commissioned Officer
  - [ ] Commissioned Officer

**3. Please indicate your gender.**
  - [ ] Male
  - [ ] Female
3. Great Bosses

Throughout our Air Force careers, we all worked for some good, some not so good, and probably a few bosses we would consider Great. This survey is focused on these Great Bosses.

4. How many GREAT BOSSES did you have in your military career?

- None of my bosses were great -- Sorry, this survey is about Great Bosses, thank you for considering the survey. Please exit the survey.
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

5. What distinguished the GREAT BOSSES from the good bosses?
4. Cared About You Personally

6. Thinking about the GREAT BOSSES you had in the Air Force, please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My great boss made a point of reaching out to my family.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. My great boss encouraged me to make my family a priority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. My great boss knew the names of my family members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. My great boss helped my family when I was not available.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. My great boss freed me up to take care of my family during a family crisis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. My great boss supported me during a difficult family time.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. My great boss took time to get to know me personally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. My great boss helped me improve myself.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. My great boss gave me guidance about life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>j. My great boss moved our relationship to a mentoring type relationship.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Thinking about your GREAT BOSSES, on a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate their ability to show they cared about you personally?

1 -- Gave little or no indication that they cared about me personally.  
10 -- Went to great lengths to show they cared about me personally.
5. Cared About You Professionally

8. Again, thinking about the GREAT BOSSES you had in the Air Force, please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My great boss guided me in my career.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. My great boss helped me pursue my professional goals.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. My great boss played a big role in developing me for promotion.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. My great boss helped me understand my job.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. My great boss took time to invest in me professionally.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. My great boss helped me to understand how the Air Force works.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. My great boss gave me hands-on feedback about my job performance so I could improve.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. My great boss empowered me to do my job.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. My great boss helped me live up to the potential he or she saw in me.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. My great boss helped me to perform at a high level in my job.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. My great boss advised me how to have a successful Air Force career.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cared About You Professionally (continued)

*9. Again, thinking about the GREAT BOSSES you had in the Air Force, please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My great boss helped me see how my job fit into a bigger Air Force perspective.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. My great boss gave me more responsibilities as my abilities grew.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. My great boss helped me work through a difficult job related issue.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. My great boss spent time with me on job related issues.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. My great boss came to my work area to make sure all was going well with me.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. My great boss asked my opinion.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. My great boss shared his or her thoughts with me.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. My great boss helped me recover after a mistake.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. My great boss valued my professional abilities.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. My great boss trusted my abilities to handle a difficult job.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>k. My great boss saw performance potential in me.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>l. My great boss bragged on my performance in public.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. My great boss periodically gave small awards (time off, plaque, atta-boys, etc) for good performance.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>n. My great boss showed appreciation for good, hard work.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Thinking about your GREAT BOSSES, on a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate their ability to show they cared about you professionally.

1--Gave little or no indication that they cared about me professionally. 10--Went to great lengths to show they cared about me professionally.
11. Please provide any additional actions that demonstrated your GREAT BOSSES cared about you.
7. Cared About the Mission with a Focus on Mission Execution

*12. Again, thinking about the GREAT Bosses you had in the Air Force, please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My great boss explained the context and the purpose of the mission.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. My great boss explained how the mission fit into the bigger picture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. My great boss communicated the mission plan to all members of the unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. My great boss explained the roles of all the players in the overall execution of the mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. My great boss helped to execute the mission with unit members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. My great boss personally came to my work area to make sure all activities were smoothly being executed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. My great boss took personal responsibility for the unit’s poor performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Pencil-whipping reports was forbidden by my great boss.</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. My great boss studied the mission to be better prepared to lead the unit in executing the mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>j. My great boss gave clear direction to the unit regarding mission execution to prevent confusion.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
8. Cared About the Mission with a Focus on Mission Execution (continued)

* 13. Again, thinking about the GREAT BOSSES you had in the Air Force, please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My great boss looked for better ways to execute the mission.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. From what I could tell, my great boss put high mission execution above his or her own personal desires.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. My great boss set high standards for himself or herself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. My great boss took the unit's mission seriously.</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. My great boss ensured that mission related activities were accomplished correctly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. My great boss endeavored to improve mission execution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. My great boss personally lived up to high mission execution standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. My great boss refused to let administrative staff work hinder mission execution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. My great boss worked hard to get feedback from our customers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14. With a focus on mission execution, please provide an overall rating of how much your GREAT BOSSES cared about the unit's mission.

0—Gave little to no indication that they cared about the unit's mission with a focus on mission execution.  
10—Went to great lengths to show they cared about the unit's mission with a focus on mission execution.
9. Cared About the Mission with a Focus on Empowering the Unit

* 15. Again, thinking about the GREAT BOSSES you had in the Air Force, please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>My great boss showed he or she appreciated the unit's hard work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>My great boss had the unit's back.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>My great boss was positive about the unit and its members' performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>My great boss worked to build camaraderie in the unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>My great boss worked to connect with the people in the unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>My great boss praised good performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>My great boss held informal forums to explain topics of interest to unit members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>My great boss visited unit members at all hours in their work area to see how they were doing.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10. Cared About the Mission with a Focus on Empowering the Unit (continued)

* 16. Again, thinking about the GREAT BOSSES you had in the Air Force, please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. My great boss worked to ensure the unit had the resources it needed to execute the mission.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. My great boss bragged on my unit teammates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. My great boss was positive about the unit and its members’ performance.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. My great boss was with the unit during difficult working conditions.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. My great boss supported the unit when speaking with outside agencies.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Please provide an overall rating of how much your GREAT BOSSES cared about the unit's mission with a focus on empowering the unit.

1– Gave little to no indication that they cared about the unit's mission with a focus on empowering the unit.

10– Went to great lengths to show they cared about the unit's mission with a focus on empowering the unit.

18. Please provide any additional actions that demonstrated your GREAT BOSSES cared about the unit's mission.
11. Responses to the GREAT BOSSES

* 19. Thinking about the GREAT BOSSES (relative to the good bosses) you had in the Air Force, please make the selection that best fits each topic and finishes the following statement. Because of my GREAT BOSSES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d. My sense of freedom in my job...</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
<th>Somewhat Decreased</th>
<th>Did Not Change</th>
<th>Somewhat Increased</th>
<th>Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e. My sense that family is a priority...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. My desire to treat my subordinates the same way my great bosses treated me...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. My sense of trust in my great bosses...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. My performance level...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. My desire to prevent my great bosses from looking bad...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. My sense of freedom to bring bad news to my great bosses...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. My desire to seek the approval of my great bosses...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. My family's sense of appreciation of my great bosses...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. My transparency in my communications with my great bosses...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. My confidence in my job...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. My sense of worry about my great bosses' reactions to bad news...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. My willingness to follow my great bosses...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. My drive to prevent my great bosses' disappointment in me...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. My desire to exceed my great bosses' expectations...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u. My desire to make my great bosses' vision a reality...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. My sense of mission focus...</td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>Somewhat Decreased</td>
<td>Did Not Change</td>
<td>Somewhat Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Please rate your overall performance response to these GREAT BOSSES that cared about you and cared about the mission simultaneously.

1–I did the minimum to get by.
10–I went well beyond the call of duty.
| 21. Please provide any additional ways you responded to the GREAT BOSSES that cared about you and cared about the mission simultaneously. |
### 12. Conclusion

Thank you very much for participating in this survey! Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments you would like to add.

vfr

Warfield Tufts
References


