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Hazing in the Military

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*What is the dilemma?  
good topic*

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Abstract?

## Hazing in the Military

*AR-600-20 Definition of Hazing.*

The Army is a values-based organization where everyone is encouraged to do what is right by treating others as they should be treated with dignity and respect. Hazing is in opposition to our values and is prohibited. Hazing is any conduct whereby one military member or employee, regardless of service or rank, unnecessarily causes another military member or employee, regardless of service or rank, to suffer or be exposed to an activity, which is cruel, abusive, oppressive or harmful. Hazing includes, but is not limited to any form of initiation, “rite of passage” or congratulatory act that involves inflicting pain or encouraging others to engage in illegal, harmful, demeaning or dangerous acts. Physically striking another in order to inflict pain; piercing another’s skin in any manner; forcing or requiring the consumption of excessive amounts of food, alcohol, drugs, or other substances can be considered hazing. Simply telling another soldier to participate in any such activity is also considered hazing. Hazing need not involve physical contact among or between military members or employees; it can be verbal or psychological in nature. Hazing is not limited to superior-subordinate relationships. It may occur between peers or even, under certain circumstances, may involve actions directed towards senior military personnel by those juniors in rank or grade to them. Hazing has at times occurred during graduation ceremonies or similar military “rites of passage.” However, it may also happen in day-to-day military settings. It is prohibited in all cases, to include off duty or “unofficial” celebrations or unit functions. Express or implied consent to hazing is not a defense to violation of AR 600-20. (AR600-20)

*History.*

From the time a child begins to walk and talk, parents teach them right and wrong by use of rewards or punishments. These punishments range may include scolding, isolation, spankings, or grounding. In schools, teachers send children to the corner, write their name on the board, or give them detention when they show fault in their actions. The same set of actions is set up for adults but the consequences are stronger in order for the adult to be affected. An adult will not take offense to having his name on a board or being sent to a corner, hence stern criticisms, physical deeds, and moral degradation are applied to persuade the individual into doing what is expected. These methods of hazing are even more effective when applied to groups. Hazing can bond a number of individuals and make them strive harder to succeed. When a group is “lined up”, they are to act as one, not as individuals, which is imperative in military, sports, and even in fraternal brotherhoods. If a single individual fails, the entire group must face the consequence together. A single person may not be affected by the punishment, but the mental anguish they receive when watching their peers pay for their own failure is more powerful in changing their actions and learning.

*Military hazing.*

The concept of hazing in society has long since been a source of debate, yet it has also served as a means of training designed to save lives. Hazing has been around almost as long as humankind but its formal introduction became most apparent in the military. Hazing is used to bring a group of people together as a unit and teach them a great deal of information in a short amount of time. Hazing is designed as a consequently based teaching method where a mistake leads to harassment of some sort. This harassment may include physical or mental discomfort,

embarrassment, ridicule, or other forms of physical abuse, excessive fatigue, psychological shocks, chores, involuntary road trips, and any morally degrading games or activities. Hazing also develops a high degree of respect from the leader as well as a greater appreciation of the group and its purpose.

Hazing exists in all Armies in some form or another. Unity and respect are vital when lives are on the line. Hazing turns a group of individuals into a finely tuned machine where all the parts work together as one. The troops that defend the United States of America have all been hazed in one fashion or another, which has made the USA the most powerful nation in the world. Discipline, respect, trust, and unity make up the solid foundation required for a strong military.

The movie Full Metal Jacket gives an accurate portrayal of hazing in the military. Private Pyle, an overweight and undisciplined new comer, is caught hiding a doughnut in his military supply box where only supplies are permitted. The drill instructor makes the rest of Pyle's platoon hold a down position for pushups while Pyle eats his doughnut. Not only does Pyle feel poorly for punishing his team for his actions, but also his team resents him and strives to keep him in line. By the end of boot camp, Private Pyle is in peak physical condition and performs his tasks to perfection.

#### *Conclusion.*

The military should not stop its hazing but should control it so that the people who wrongfully haze to cause harm are prosecuted. The military continues to line up soldiers and makes them do physical tasks (i.e. push-ups, sit-ups, etc.) when they disobey a command or break a rule. This hazing develops a level of stress that the soldiers must learn to control and work with because in wartime situations, there is an incomprehensible amount of pressure put

upon a soldier that must be dealt with to live. This form of positive hazing is treasured by the military and continues to keep it strong.

Hazing done correctly is an excellent means of bonding a group of people so that they think and act as one, which is a necessity in certain roles. It teaches trust, responsibility, respect, and other qualities that cannot be consistently met in other forms of facilitation. Constructive hazing gives individuals a drive for learning and acting in the way that is expected of them. This drive can be carried by one's own self through their life and lead them to success. Hazing has made the military a force that protects the freedom of every individual in this country. Hazing should not be banned due to the actions of the few looking to degrade people for their own entertainment. The positive aspects of hazing cannot be understated. Hazing needs to be used constructively for the betterment of the individual soldier and the Army as a whole.