

Running head: ARMY VALUES AND ETHICS IN TODAY'S FORCE

Army Values and Ethics

MSG Edward J. Dunn

United States Sergeants Major Academy

Class 58

SGM Del Hoyo

7 December 2007

ARMY VALUES AND ETHICS IN TODAY'S FORCE

As a senior leader in the Army we serve in today, you are constantly in the public eye and under a microscope in regards to your actions and conduct on and off duty. One of leader's primary responsibilities today is to develop his subordinates from all facets of society into one superior force that believes in the values of our great nation and our great Army. Webster's Dictionary defines ethics as the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation.

The United States Army further breaks this down into seven values; 1) Loyalty – Completely devoted to your unit, its Soldiers, the US Army and dedicated to the mission of defending the Constitution of the United States. 2) Duty – complete your assigned mission to the best of your ability. 3) Respect - Treat Soldiers with dignity regardless of rank as they deserve based on their mission of being defenders of freedom. 4) Selfless Service – Never thinking of one self but always thinking of the United States and the protection of our citizens. 5) Honor - Live up to Army values. 6) Integrity – conducting daily business and never jeopardizing anything legally or morally. 7) Personal Courage – the ability to go above and beyond and accomplish the mission even if it results in death. We must instill these values in our Soldiers constantly and consistently.

These values represent a unique set of high standards that the entire Army adheres to regardless of where a Soldier is living or working. “Our profession's ethic remains the foundation of trust which the American people place in their military” (Snider and Watkins, 2002). A great example of this is during the ship out week when a couple sends their young son

or daughter off to basic training, the trust is that the Army is an extension of their family and they are safe hands. However, we have Drill Sergeants that abuse this trust and abuse their power by committing trainee violations.

The Army is currently changing to face the many challenges it will endure during the Global War on Terror and future operations to defend our freedom. Our great nation and the American citizens expect our entire Army to set the example and maintain a higher standard for the world to admire and to emulate. Soldiers must realize that their actions affect more than just their unit and has a major impact on the support of our country and the American people. Soldiers must know what is acceptable for commenting on, and what is not. You as a leader must also stress that there are expected punishment for slandering our Commander and Chief and other Superior's.

Currently there are Soldiers operating in Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, and all across America, each Soldier must live the Army Values whether they are walking the streets of Baghdad or buying computer paper from the local Wal-Mart. Soldiers are indoctrinated with mandatory ethics and the Army Values training from day one of Basic and again reinforced during Advanced Individual Training. When a Private enters the barracks on the first day of basic training there are posters on the walls that teach what the seven Army Values are and what the Warrior Ethos is. Each private is required to memorize and know the Army Values prior to graduating; Drill Sergeants embed the importance by constant training throughout the course.

This is also true on college and university campuses around the United States, in each ROTC classroom the same posters exist and each cadet is required to not only learn the Army Values but also take additional classes on ethics in the Military as part of the college curriculum. The

training does not stop there; every Soldier is required to complete annual ethics refresher training throughout the time that they are in the Army. Why is this important? Ethics and values are a learned trait, not every person in the Army has the same background and upbringing as the next. Nevertheless, because every Soldier is under the eye of the media and the scrutiny of the American people, the Army must ensure that each Soldier does what is morally and ethically right.

It is evident at basic training posts such as Fort Knox, Kentucky and Fort Leonard wood, Missouri that people do not always understand the training that they receive, that not every Soldier lives up to the Army's seven values. Because of the media coverage of the Iraq conflict, most Americans have heard of the Abu Ghraib Prison incident. The Abu Ghraib Prison incident is a key incident that demonstrates that not every Soldier lives up to the training that they have received throughout their military career. Several of the Soldiers associated with the Abu Ghraib incident were brought back to Fort Knox, Kentucky and have served in one unit or another while awaiting military trial. Other ethical incidents are present on Fort Knox that are not as highly publicized, such as Drill Sergeants hazing privates during basic training, hazing that includes both mental and physical abuse.

Other ethical dilemmas are present that are not so harsh, such as giving or receiving gifts that exceed the monetary limit set by federal law, or abuse of the government credit card or government travel card. Though these incidents do not involve physical or mental abuse to human beings, they are abusing the established systems set in place by the trust of each American citizen.

Continued ethical training is necessary in every organization, especially one as large and diverse as the Army, ensuring that every Soldier knows and understands the ethics and the values established is of key importance to the smooth operations at home or abroad of today's American Army. The Army continued success will be evaluated by how well the system continues to conform to the values set in place.

In summary, it is imperative that our young men and woman understand the importance of their own values and how they apply to the Army values and Ethics. The proper training and education will allow our Soldiers to understand they represent something bigger than themselves and they should take pride in being direct representatives of the United States Army.

References

- International Military Ethics Symposium*. Retrieved 7 December 2006, from United States Air Force Academy: <http://www.usafa.af.mil/jscope/>.
- JAGCNet. (2006, 31 May). Training. In *2006 Ethics Training Slides*. Retrieved 7 December, from US Army - JAGCNet:
[https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/JAGCNETIntranet/Databases/Administrative+Law/soco.nsf/\(JAGCNetDocID\)/485A00309CF845B085257100004A8DB5/\\$FILE/2006%20Annual%20Ethics%20Training%20Slides.ppt](https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/JAGCNETIntranet/Databases/Administrative+Law/soco.nsf/(JAGCNetDocID)/485A00309CF845B085257100004A8DB5/$FILE/2006%20Annual%20Ethics%20Training%20Slides.ppt).
- Merritt, J. (2005, 26 April). *TalkLeft the politics of crime*. Retrieved 9 December 2006, from <http://www.talkleft.com/story/2005/04/26/933/81377>.
- Military Ethics Virtual Library*. (2006). Retrieved 7 December 2006, from <http://www.military-ethics.org/>.
- Snider, D. M & Watkins, G. L. (2002). *The Future of the Army Profession*. The McGraw-Hill Companies.