

Running Head: SOME SENIOR LEADERSHIPS LACK OF ETHICS

Some Senior Leaderships Lack of Ethics

SGM Deborah Keesee

United States Sergeants Major Academy

Class 58

SGM McKnight-Gullett

3 January 2008

Abstract

Some of our senior command leadership is lacking in ethics and it is to be abhorred. Many Soldiers look up to these individuals and hold them at a very high standard. The senior leader is someone that is revered. They are in the position where the younger Soldier aspires to grow up into what they are. When these senior leader supervisors commit acts against the Army ethos it is a true ethical dilemma. This is not in compliance with the Soldier's Army polices and values. Leaders must decide where they stand in certain situations that may jeopardize the Army ethos.

My Thoughts and My Opinions

Ethical dilemmas in today's Army Senior Leadership should not be an issue. There are many ethical problems in the military and one of them is the pursuit of the young junior Soldier by the senior leadership Soldier. There is never a time when a married motor sergeant should ask his mechanic out on a date. It is also not correct for a married Master Sergeant to ask his young specialist out for a drink, not the right arm night, but a private bar.

Senior leaders should never put themselves in the situation where they are fraternizing with their Soldiers in these types of situations. A senior leader is not only required to obey the Army's rules and regulations, but they are required to uphold them. My strong belief is that a senior leader is held to a much higher standard than that of the young junior enlisted Soldier. A senior leader knows the difference between right and wrong and they are required to enforce it. The senior leader has the age and maturity and should know better when it comes to the ethical standards. When a senior leader chooses to come onto or sexually harass a Soldier in their ranks, they ruin the moral of everyone in the unit. The trust that was in the command is no longer there within the command.

As a brand new private in the Army I noticed my senior Drill Sergeant having an affair with another Drill Sergeant that worked for him. I had absolutely no respect for him and neither did many of my fellow Soldiers. My opinion of this Drill Sergeant was extremely low. This was my first low opinion of Army senior leadership. At one point I wondered what type of organization had I really joined. This was only the beginning, when I left basic training I went across post to my advanced individual training unit. I was given a pass for the weekend and headed for the bus station. While I was at the Ft Dix bus station I noticed one of the other drill

sergeants in my company kissing his trainee Soldier, his platoon leader. This was a completely unethical situation.

The former CSM McKinney the, 10th Sergeant Major in the United States Army, put a true blemish on the most senior leaders in the Army, the Sergeant Majors. For this man to do what he did in his position is abhorring. He was charged with sexual harassment charges. When this charge went forward he immediately dropped his retirement papers. The former CSM McKinney was cleared of sexual harassment charges. The Web site for Wikipedia (2007) informs us “he was convicted of obstruction of justice, and was reduced in grade to the rank of Master Sergeant”. This was the punishment he received along with a formal letter of reprimand. Once he was fully retired he started collecting his complete retirement benefits and his pay was that of as a Sergeant Major. Somehow to me it seems like he completely got away with it, no jail time was served, his retirement benefits or pay were not altered, and he just walked away from the military. It was not just one woman who stepped forward and accused him; it was several women who accused him of sexual harassment. If he had read FM 6-22, but he could not have read the regulation since it is new, the Army did not have FM 6-22, it had a different regulation that has been superseded.

I remember when the Army started teaching the Consideration of Others training. I thought to myself everything they were teaching was normal common knowledge. I seriously wondered why the Army was spending money on this type of training. During the course of instruction in the class we were told the story of a young sailor that did not have any ethics. Then I understood the purpose of this new training. Our society as a whole is losing its values and ethics. The military mirrors society. What is out there in society is what comes into the military. New training is started like the Consideration of Others program which started in 1999.

And then new regulations to cover these new topics are written. As society changes regulations are completely revised and old ones are completely superseded.

I remember when my husband was a Drill Sergeant in the early 1990's he told me many types of interesting stories about the new trainees. He had spent his whole career as a combat Soldier working only with men. When he had his first group of female trainees he made sure he never put himself in the situation where he would be accused of anything. Many of these young Soldiers looked up to their Drill Sergeants highly, and it would not have taken much to take advantage of the situation. He kept his morals and valued his ethics. But other Drill Sergeants did not, as we found out in the mid 1990's. There were several Drill Sergeants brought up on charges for having sex with their trainees. These were all Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs) who had been in the army for awhile. The rank of a drill sergeant is at least a Staff Sergeant (SSG) or Sergeant First Class (SFC). These are NCOs who have been in the Army and knew the values and ethics, yet they choose to ignore them.

I recently just heard of another Command Sergeant Major who was relieved in a combat zone in Iraq for having relations with his driver. This senior Command Sergeant Major had no idea what ethics are if he was willing to impose himself on his subordinate, his driver. He was the grown up in this situation and there is no excuse in the world for his behavior.

I have also learned of the previous Command Sergeant Major of the Ft Bliss Hospital who had relations with a Soldier under his command. He was in the most senior command leadership of the hospital and an action like that should have never taken place if he knew his warrior ethos.

Even at the prestige United States Sergeants Majors Academy during the course of the year 2002 to 2003 there was a situation. A sexual harassment charge was filed against a Faculty

advisor (FA). The FA is in a very senior leadership position as an instructor. The charge was mishandled within the command. During that situation the whole leadership chain of command was relieved and the situation was handled. The case should have never gone that far, it should have been handled correctly in the first place. I am very glad that proper action was finally taken, but it should have not had to go through that extreme. Fellow Soldiers actually wonder why female Soldiers do not report such sexual harassment. It is because of cases like this one, where there is complete lack of ethical morals.

In the Army values, loyalty, respect, honor, integrity all of these are broken when the senior leadership pushes themselves upon their junior Soldiers. First they have failed to be loyal to the rules. How can this Soldier possibly be loyal to the unit? Or how could they be loyal to the Army for that matter? Second value is respect, how can they respect their fellow Soldiers and junior Soldiers. Third honor, they can not honor the military in which they serve when acting in this manner. Fourth and final is integrity. The act of making advancements upon a junior Soldier has no integrity. If they are married it violates the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The moral responsibility of the Soldier should be at a very high standard. The values we as Soldiers hold, we know what is right and what is wrong. It is the responsibility of the senior Soldier to set a high standard of ethics, not to lower it.

Conclusion

In conclusion I have covered different scenarios where a senior leader has used his position to make advances upon a junior Soldier. I have also covered situations from the news, first hand experience and public knowledge information. The senior leader needs to remember what ethics are. They must know that ethics are a system of moral principles. Ethics are rules of conduct that should be obeyed by senior leaders in command. The senior leader is who Soldiers

look up to. These individuals are held at a very high standard. The senior leader is someone that is revered. They have the position where the younger Soldier aspires to grow up into. Lowering these standards is not in compliance with the Soldier's Army policies and values. Leaders must decide where they stand in certain situations so that they are never in a situation that would jeopardize the Army ethos.

I am not saying all senior leaders lack ethics and values, but throughout the Army some are. I have stayed in for 25 years because I have worked for and with some of the most moral, ethical, outstanding senior leaders. But the unethical ones are out there and I have experienced first hand some very unethical leaders and I am sad to say they were in senior leadership positions.

References

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. (2007) Gene C. McKinney. Retrieved 11 November 2007

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_C._McKinney