

Teaching Army Values

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Outline

Thesis: How NCOs are solely responsible for teaching Ethics, Army Values, to soldiers in support of unit, Army and combat missions.

I. Ethical Beliefs

A. Ethics and my beliefs

B. NCO leadership and teaching Army Value to Soldiers

II. Army Values

A. NCOs and the Teaching of Army Values

B. NCOs responsibilities

III. Conclusion

Ethics

Webster's Universal College Dictionary defines ethics as "a system or set of moral principles (values); the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or governing a particular group, culture, etc. I believe ethics and army values are critical tasks that noncommissioned officer (NCOs) must teach to Soldiers. However, ethics and values are difficult to live up to because of the different views NCOs and Soldiers have on their worth and meaning.

For years, I've associated ethics with feelings, religious concepts, the standards of behavior expected in a society, the law, and what society accepts. However, my extended research has changed my beliefs of what ethics is and is not. Ethics is clearly not a matter of following ones feelings, because feelings can deter a person from doing what is right (For instance, a married spouse committing an infidelity relationship). In fact, feelings often cause people to refrain from what is ethical. For example, a soldiers who by all means is faithful to his wife, finds out while deployed to Iraq that his spouse has sent several pictures to his unit that proves her unfaithfulness. To keep a long story short, once the Soldiers return from Iraq, he now has different feeling for his spouse, so he pursues to kill his spouse and her companion.

In addition, people should not identify ethics with religion, because most religions require high ethical standards. Ethics cannot be confined to religion nor is it the same as religion. Restricting ethics to a definition of religious conduct would imply that only religious or righteous people could be ethical. On the contrary, ethics applies as much to the behavior of an atheist as to that of the saint. Being ethical cannot be the same as following the law. The law often incorporates ethical standards by which we abide. In fact, laws, like feelings, can deviate from

what is ethical, our own pre-Civil War slavery laws and the apartheid laws of South Africa are obvious examples of laws that deviate from what is ethical. Finally, being ethical cannot be the same as doing, “what ever society accepts.” Because if being ethical is doing “what society accepts”, we would then need to find out from society its ethical beliefs. For example, to decide what I think about abortion, I would have to take a survey of Society’s view of abortion, then confirm my beliefs to what ever society accepts. However, ethical decisions are not decided by doing a survey. Therefore, the lack of social consensus on many issues makes it impossible to compare ethics with what ever society accepts. Some groups in society accept abortion, however, others do not.

On the other hand, ethics refers to two things: First, behavioral standards that define right and wrong conduct and determine what Soldiers ought to refrain from before committing an illegal act or crime. Secondly, ethics develops ethical standards in order for Soldiers to examine their own moral beliefs, moral conduct and helps to ensure Soldiers live up to Army ethical standards (Davis; Velasques; Claire; Shanks; Meyer). Furthermore, our Army has its own set of values that Soldiers must abide by in the form of attitudes relating to people, concepts and things. The Acronym “LDRSHIP” refers to Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal courage and are known as Army Values that describe how NCOs and Soldiers should conduct themselves everyday (FM 22-100). These values are nonnegotiable, apply to all Soldiers and are the building blocks that help Soldiers decide right from wrong in any situation. NCOs in particular are held responsible for teaching Army values to Soldiers. Although, Soldiers can intelligently make their own decisions when challenged with an unethical situation, the fact remains that with the teaching of Army values, Soldiers get a better understanding of values, ethical decision making, and could possibly avoid the negative aspects of unethical conduct.

Teaching Army values to soldiers is paramount in today's Army and they're not dependent upon rank and apply to all Soldiers. NCOs whether senior or junior must uphold and enforce ethical standards and values to retain the trust and confidence of subordinates, peers, and superiors. Furthermore, NCOs accomplish the teaching of values by enforcing their NCO responsibilities which add to the empowerment of Soldiers learning and understanding Army values. FM 7-22.7 and the NCO Guide (7th addition) informs NCOs of their responsibilities which aids in teaching Army values. The most positive influence a NCO can have on Soldiers is to educate, encourage, develop, and instill in them the desire to live up to and exemplify Army values 24 hours a day. Internalizing these values, and living by them is what builds professional Soldiers in today's Army. An NCO's role is not to change a Soldier's intrapersonal value (all Soldiers have personal differences) but impress upon them the importance of Army Values.

In conclusion, Ethics and values are an important part of our lives both on and off duty. And I truly believe our NCOs are solely responsible for teaching ethics and Army values to Soldiers as well as being a mentor, a role model, and a leader by example. Only after our Soldiers live up to ethical Standards, Army values and develop a sense of ownership, can we then say our Soldiers, units and Army have ethically defeated a stifling problem our Army faces today (the failure of Soldiers to make the appropriate ethical decision at the right given time).. What NCOs have to do is teach first hand, then ensure that today's Soldier knows the lineage they have to live up to (Bolt).

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