

“Identify an Ethical Problem Facing the Army Today”

The United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Class 56

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The Army Sponsorship Program has been identified as an ethical problem facing the Army today. Having a good unit sponsorship program is a tremendous credit not only to the unit but also indicates that strong leaders run the unit.

Everyone is aware that the first impression of a unit should be positive, otherwise a soldier might be hesitant about being in and working for a unit which does not properly sponsor new soldiers. For these reasons, the Commander as well as the Command Sergeant Major and the First Sergeants must properly manage the unit's sponsorship program. The sponsorship program has to be well thought out and enforced if it is to work. The commander's intent on sponsorship must be understood, sponsors trained to standard, and routine spot checks completed for it to be effective.

Almost all of us have complained or has heard a lot of complaining about their bad experiences with the sponsorship program, but honestly, not much improvement has been made to the overall program. The following is an example; a young soldier was assigned to a new unit. He arrived at the airport with his family in a foreign country, but there was no sponsor to greet them. It seemed that no one in the unit cared because it was not their assigned responsibility. The soldier was forced to take a hire a taxi for transportation and arrange accommodations for his family in a strange hotel that was a great distance away from the installation he had been assigned to. He was told on his second day in country that he was AWOL because he neglected to sign in with the unit and wasn't expected for

at least ten more days. This soldier was forced to endure extreme hardship because of his inexperience with solving this type of problem and as a result, he spent a considerable amount of his personal money to take care of his family. If the sponsorship program had worked properly, this young soldier would not have had to deal with such negative impressions of the Army. This type of treatment results in the soldier possibly adopting a negative attitude towards the unit, chain of command, and other leaders.

I must also highlight that the Sergeants Major Academy's program worked very well for me upon my arrival in El Paso. Most of the other International students also expressed the same feelings. According to their comments and opinions, most were worried about their future sponsors and required work while attending the Sergeants Major Academy. Some of them still complain a little bit about their assigned sponsors because it seems as if these sponsors don't give one hundred percent to sponsoring the international students. Some other international students have mixed feelings not having a sponsor that they can count on to provide assistance as required.

Personally speaking, I think my sponsor is the best that I could have had to assist me and my family. He provides an excellent example for all Sergeants Major sponsoring international students at the Sergeants Major Academy and also for all soldiers of the United States Army. He has significantly contributed to me and my family's satisfaction of being here in the United States and USASMA. He is quick to share his knowledge on all pertinent matters concerning not only the Army but life as well with me and my family. He is not only a distinguished Soldier, but also a great friend. I strongly

recommend that each Soldier speak with him and then they will understand what I'm writing about and see that I'm right.

Caring for soldiers should be one of a leader's greatest priorities, second only to accomplishing an assigned mission. Good sponsorship is the easiest way to make a great impression and let the new soldier know that you care. Once a soldier feels that a leader genuinely cares, then he or she will go the extra mile to turn around and make a good impression on the leader. Good sponsorship also helps to strengthen the bonds of a successful team. It builds mutual respect and loyalty between the leader and subordinate. I plan to improve my unit's sponsorship program when I arrive back in my country.