

TITLE: THE ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL U.S. ARMY OFFICER

"THE ARMY ETHIC MUST STRIVE TO SET THE INSTITUTION OF THE ARMY AND ITS PURPOSE IN PROPER CONTEXT--THAT OF SERVICE TO THE LARGER INSTITUTION OF THE NATION, AND FULLY RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF ITS PEOPLE. OUR ETHIC MUST CONVEY THE MORAL FRAMEWORK AND THE ULTIMATE SENSE OF PURPOSE NECESSARY TO PRESERVE AND CONTINUALLY RENEW AN ARMY WHICH PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE MAINTENANCE OF OUR FREE AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. IT IS FROM THIS CONSTITUTIONAL CHARGE, AND FROM THE HARSH REALITIES OF THE BATTLEFIELD--WHERE OUR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND US MAY BE HAZARDED TO SHIELD THE REPUBLIC--THAT THE ARMY ETHIC IS FORMED."

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The U.S. Army Officer is a professional with the sworn mission to "protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. As such, the Army Ethic which regulates his service must reflect not only the functional imperatives of the battlefield, but a commitment to those fundamental national values reflected in our Constitution. The young man or woman who enters the profession must be educated as to the values of the profession with the aim of ethical development of the individual as well as a continuing ethical awareness of the profession. To do this the Army has developed and implemented a sequential and developmental program on professional ethics. The development of our professional officer corps follows two tracks: (1) the formal service schools which each officer will attend at various times throughout his or her career, and (2) the regular Army unit of assignment where the officer serves day-to-day. Let's take a look at each of these areas as they emphasize ethical development.

As a result of various factors, not the least of which was the Viet Nam War, the U.S. Army underwent a period of serious introspection as to what are our fundamental values as a profession, and what is the sense of commitment of

the officer corps to those values. Several studies were conducted and articles written throughout the 1970's concerning the Army Ethic. A Military Ethics Monograph was published in 1977 by the Army which laid out a framework for a "progressive and sequential" program of instruction on professional ethics. At that time the various Army schools were left pretty much on their own to teach ethics as they saw fit.

What was being taught differed at various schools, and was often redundant as an officer proceeded up the ladder to higher level schooling. In 1980 the Combined Arms Center, located at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, was designated as the proponent for Leadership and Ethics training throughout the Army. This consolidation of the mission for ethics training allowed for the development of the progressive and sequential program of instruction the Army recognized was needed. A newly formed organization: THE CENTER FOR ARMY LEADERSHIP, was formed in 1983 to carry out the mission "To be the Army's proponent for Leadership and Ethics in order to integrate leadership and ethics doctrine, training, and application throughout the Army."

(Center for Army Leadership (CAL) mission statement). The Army now has in place throughout its education system a core leadership program which includes professional ethics as an essential ingredient. At each level of the military education system a common program is presented which further develops material presented at the preceding level.

Let's now look at this educational program of the Army officer. Each officer who stays on active duty and makes the Army a career will progress through the following Army schools;

Pre-commissioning: this occurs at either the U.S. Military Academy, a Reserve Officer Training Corps program (ROTC) at an affiliated civilian college or university, or Officer Candidate School (OCS). Satisfactory completion of one of these programs is required for commissioning into the officer corp of the U.S. Army.

Officer Basic Course (OBC): upon completion of pre-commissioning training, and having sworn an oath of commissioning, the officer attends initial training in his branch of service. This is accomplished during the first year of commissioned service.

Officer Advanced Course (OAC): after approximately five years of commissioned service the Army officer attends an advanced course in his branch of service. The officer is normally in the grade of captain at this time.

Command and General Staff College (CGSC): during approximately the 12th - 15th years of service the Army officer will attend the Army's Command and General Staff College or an equivalent school of a sister service. Graduation from this course, either resident or non-resident program, is required for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel.

Army War College: this senior level school is highly selective and attended by lieutenant colonels and colonels during their 18th - 23rd year of service.

As can be seen, the professional Army officer is brought back to the classroom on a regular basis throughout his or her career to further develop professional skills. Education in the Army Ethic and moral reasoning is an integral part of the learning experience at each level. Four major themes provide the focus for ethics training in the school house:

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- (1) The Army as a Profession
- (2) Values
- (3) Ethical Decision-Making
- (4) Morality in, and of, War

Each of these themes provides a basis for instruction which is developed over the course of a military career. Varying emphasis is given to any one theme depending on the maturity level of the student.

The Army as a Profession emphasizes the essential characteristics which make the military service of an Army officer a profession and not just an occupation. Of special importance in this block is the moral imperative of service to the nation, and the ethical responsibilities that accompany that service.

The Values theme focuses attention on the need to develop an understanding of, and commitment to, those values which support our sworn mission to support and defend the Constitution. Secretary of the Army Marsh has proposed that those values consist of two tiers; first are those values which support the mission of the Army and form the basic soldier values. They consist of such values as: courage, competence, candor, and commitment. Whatever specific names are applied they constitute a value set that allows an Army to fight and win on the battlefield. As such they are required of any military professional, any time, any where. These values alone however are not enough. Without some higher guiding values a professional force may well be used for immoral purposes. This was clearly evidenced by a study of the German Army during World War II. These crucial "second tier values" are those that had their genesis, at least in this

country, in the American Revolution and which are reflected in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. It is a commitment to these values which provides the moral base for our profession. An honest effort is made in the classroom not to merely indoctrinate, but truly educate the officer as to the necessary values of the profession.

Ethical Decision Making is the theme used to focus our efforts on the moral development of the individual to allow him or her to make autonomous moral decisions when confronted with the ethical dilemmas inherent in the profession. The Army is not interested in developing the compliant officer, blindly following orders from his superiors, but rather in the development of the individual capable of autonomous reasoning with a broad understanding of the unique demands of the profession and the obligations inherent in military service to a free and democratic nation.

Morality in, and of, War sets the parameters for our military service. The student officer is exposed to the principles of the Just War Tradition and asked to develop an appreciation for the constraints they place on unswerving obedience. Obedience to orders does not, and cannot, relieve the individual of the responsibility to behave morally.

These then are the themes which direct the ethical education of the Army officer in the school house. In addition to formal classes focused on these specific themes, the instructors at each school have been directed to integrate ethical considerations into their various subject matter so as to develop a heightened ethical sensitivity within the student. The goal is to have a sense of ethics permeate all we do. The Army recognizes, however, that the formal education of the officer is but a small piece of his overall

education. A major responsibility for ethical development of subordinates lies with the field Army; with those commanders who deal with the soldier on a day-to-day basis. This then is the second track for the ethical development of the professional officer.

According to evolving Army doctrine the commander has a key role to play in the arena of professional ethics. The ethical responsibilities of the commander are:

- (1) be a role model
- (2) promote ethical development of subordinates
- (3) develop and sustain a positive command climate
- (4) emphasize a commitment to the Army Ethic

Each of these areas is highlighted during a pre-command course attended by battalion and brigade command selectees. The need to model ethical behavior is required of all officers, but the commander plays an important role in the development of subordinates based on his or her position within the organization. By taking a clear stand on ethical issues, always seeking to do what is "right" rather than what is expedient, the commander sets the moral tone for his subordinates and peers alike. Actively seeking to promote ethical development of subordinates requires personal contact of the commander with subordinates. It involves not only acting ethically but reasoning clearly about ethical issues, and sharing that reasoning process with subordinates. The commander must strive to create ethical sensitivity within the unit by highlighting the ethical implications of various behavior and decisions. Ethical development of subordinates demands a dialog on ethical issues whenever time permits, and the commander is encouraged to

grapple with moral dilemmas with his subordinates sharing the "why" as well as the "what" of behavior. The development of a positive command climate allows ethical development of subordinates in a supportive environment. Trust is developed through honesty at all times. The commander must encourage openness in subordinates, and criticism of decisions when merited. The commander listens to, and supports, subordinates, being tolerant of honest mistakes and using them as a tool for learning. Guidelines are clearly established as to standards of ethical behavior, and those standards are enforced. The operating values of the command are consistent with the stated values of the commander. Finally, the commander must emphasize, by word and deed, the importance of a shared commitment to the professional ethic.

Commanders are sensitized to the fact that conformity may reflect anything from simple compliance, out of a fear of punishment, to internalization of values consistent with the professional ethic. The commander needs to actively work to promote development away from simple compliance to internalization of values where the soldier understands, accepts, and is personally committed to the values of the profession.

The Army's ongoing concern with the ethical development of the professional soldier has culminated with the present year--1986--being designated as the "Year of Values." The Secretary of the Army, the Honorable John O. Marsh, has initiated the idea of themes for each year which help focus the Army on an area of special concern and importance. This Year of Values follows a year in which the Army highlighted Leadership--and the values theme is closely integrated with our concern for ethical leadership at all levels.

The expressed purpose of this theme is:

- (1) to reaffirm to the American public our commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.
- (2) to reaffirm the professional Army ethic which supports our national values.
- (3) to increase understanding of, and commitment to, the professional Army ethic and those personal values which support the Army way of life.
- (4) to emphasize the ethical elements of leadership.
- (5) to foster a common bond built on service to our nation and our Army.

The year of values is an opportunity for us in the Army to reaffirm our commitment to protect and defend the Nation and its values, understanding that this commitment may demand of us the ultimate sacrifice of life itself. We do so with pride and a sense of the awesome responsibility that is ours as Professional Soldiers.

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