

Running head: Enforcing the Standard at the USASMA

Enforcing the Standard at the USASMA

MSG Tom Schultz

L11

Ethics Paper

SGM Garza

January 3, 2008

Abstract

All Soldiers face ethical dilemmas several times during their careers. They need to have mentors and Senior Leaders to whom they can go for guidance. This only works if those in leadership positions know right from wrong themselves. Too many of our senior NCOs are failing in this area because what used to be “common sense” and “common courtesy” aren’t so common anymore. Many of our classmates here at the USASMA have constantly proven they don’t know they’re violating basic principles, or simply don’t care.

Enforcing the Standard at the USASMA

Introduction

Since arriving at the USASMA we have been constantly reminded how we are the top 1% of the Army. I have seen every one of the Army Values violated during my time here at the academy, which doesn't say much for the top 1%. The paragraphs which follow discuss various observations I've made since arriving at the USASMA.

At the Class 58 Fall Ball, some of our classmates thought it was amusing to see how many glasses they could steal. They would wait until folks went out to the dance floor and then pick up their glasses. Some left with five or six. You may say, "What's the big deal? It's only a glass. Let's take a look at the Army Values for a minute.

Loyalty- Bear true faith to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, **your unit**, and other Soldiers. In this case, "your unit" is Class 58. You've just stolen from one of your unit, and to make matters worse, if the Soldier was in your base group, it's almost like stealing from a family member.

Respect- Treat people as you would like to be treated. Would you still find it as humorous if someone stole your property?

Selfless Service- Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own. In this case, these people have done a disservice to their peers. Some people put more importance on that simple souvenir than others. The glass itself is of little value, but ten years from now when you pull yours out of your cabinet, you can identify with what should be a huge benchmark in your career and be proud of your accomplishment. The people who had theirs stolen have been deprived of that moment.

Honor- Live up to all the Army Values. Those who took other's property have dishonored the NCO Corps and themselves.

Integrity- Do what's right-legally and morally. This one needs no further explanation. It was obviously morally wrong to take another Soldier's property. This also has to make one wonder if these low-lives would steal such a small item from one of their own classmates, what will they do when faced with a really serious ethical dilemma? The root cause of this behavior is these people have a serious character flaw which must be addressed. If it can't be corrected, they need to move on to another vocation. They should not be allowed to slide by and remain enrolled at the USASMA.

When CSM Gipe from the ARNG addressed the academy on the 29th of November, the first thing he commented on was the low attendance. It was obvious by just looking around the auditorium that at least 10-15% of the seats which should have been filled were empty. Where were these missing students?

One student was out golfing getting in a "quick nine". As he was leaving the golf course around lunch time, his FA was pulling in. They both saw each other and waved as they recognized one another. As the student drove away, he saw the puzzled look on his FA's face. He wondered if his FA was going to realize he'd ditched the morning requirements and turn him in for an honor violation. If the FA didn't say something to the cadre, we now have two honor violations. There's no "ethical dilemma" here. It should be obvious what should have been done. This student should have been disenrolled and sent home.

Some Active Duty Soldiers didn't see the importance of listening to an ARNG speaker, since they thought anything he had to say would be irrelevant to them, so they took it upon themselves to skip that briefing.

Others were working on their Haines Papers, which were due on the 30th. This is a classic example of not choosing the “hard right over the easy wrong”. Time management and teamwork is obviously a problem here. The Haines Paper was put off until the last minute because some team members missed the deadline, so an ethical dilemma presented itself. Should they blow off the training Thursday morning and try to get the paper done or attend the required training? Many chose to skip the training and work on the Haines Paper on duty time. As Soldiers, we are expected to do what it takes to complete the mission. The “hard right” would have been to get together off-duty earlier in the week, or stay late after hours on Thursday to complete the mission.

Why is there a double standard here? Those who simply decided they were going to blow off the training that Thursday morning would probably be some of the first ones who would demand that UCMJ action be taken against any of their subordinates who were not at their appointed place of duty. From where does this elitist attitude come? These people think the rules apply to everyone but them. They reason, “After all, there are over six hundred students in the class. No one will miss me.” That works for a few people, but when fifty or sixty start thinking that way, the result is pretty obvious- enough empty seats that even the guest speaker notices and actually comments about the low number of Soldiers in the audience.

Another option used by some which was totally wrong and disrespectful was they brought their papers into the East Auditorium and were working on them and discussing them during the presentations. I have observed several students working on college material or other academy projects during several presentations in the East Auditorium over the past several weeks. It is very distracting when students around you are conducting side-bars while you’re trying to listen to the guest speaker.

We were told by our base group FA in Phase I that we would be amazed at the number of empty seats we would see in the East Auditorium in Phases III and IV. This statement was made as a matter of course. Why is this tolerated at the “Premier NCO Academy of the U.S. Army”? Why is it accepted, and worse yet, expected that Soldiers will not be at their prescribed places of duty?

Another issue I’ve noticed is the disrespect shown toward guest speakers and cadre members in the East Auditorium. When we had the urinalysis in December, CSM Huffman went to the podium to brief the class on the procedures. Many in the audience refused to shut their mouths, and caused CSM Huffman to leave the stage in disgust. When he returned about ten minutes later, enough people got the message that he continued with his briefing. This did not however, deter the die-hard motor mouths who still insisted on carrying on their own conversations.

It’s my understanding that when a guest speaker leaves and the class is asked to rise, we are to be at the position of attention. I’ve yet to see this actually happen. Many of our classmates seem to have a link between their backsides and their mouths, because as soon as their backsides leave their seats, they instantly engage in conversation. It doesn’t matter who it is. They even do it to General Officers.

We were told at the beginning of the course the academy used to place “sheriffs” in the East Auditorium to maintain order and ensure everyone was where he was supposed to be. We were told that it shouldn’t be necessary to implement that policy at our level. Sadly, that statement is obviously and unfortunately in error.

Conclusion

It’s time to start enforcing the standards. We need to start by restating the standards and

expectations. If our classmates insist on behaving like children, they should be treated as such. It's time to bring back the sheriffs and start embarrassing these people by separating the disrespectful people who insist on carrying on their own conversations during briefings. People who are doing college work, USASMA related papers, text messaging, playing games on cell phones and other personal devices should have them confiscated, and receive a written counseling statement from the 1SG after the briefing. The academy needs to police those who refuse to police themselves.

