

ETHICS THOUGHT PAPER

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### Abstract

I believe that the environment in which the U.S Army obtains its recruiting mission each year leads to recruiting improprieties, and pits NCO against NCO in unhealthy competition. It is a practice that is divisive and allows one individual to step on another to get on top.

Each year the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) funds Awards for distinguishing individuals that have put in the most people in a particular area or category. I have personally been the recipient of a number of these awards. While being the recipient of these highly treasured trophies I did not see an issue with the system. It wasn't until I became a First Sergeant and wanted to build a team that I started to realize the issue with recognizing one individual over the team. Even though everyone speaks of the unit being successful everyone in an organization does not benefit from the recognition. (For the purpose of this paper I will use the word entity to describe the individual and unit.) The most common practice in use is basically the oldest form of motivation: Recognition. The entity that has been the most successful over a period of time is called up front to be given some type of award and recognition. It usually produces some form of loathing or despair in the other entities. The reason for this is because there is no way for everyone to win. If one entity, recruiter A, put in 15 people and recruiter B, C and D put in 9 apiece, recruiters B, C and D gets nothing while recruiter A gets a trophy, plaque, and a key to the city. Recruiters B, C, and D did their jobs but naturally feel like they failed. But the Army Received 42 new Soldiers from this example. The next month the

process repeats itself except that recruiters B, C, and D say why try if they can't get to 15. They each put in 6 and feel better because they say that they weren't competing. Recruiter A puts in 19, apparently he liked the positive reinforcement that he received standing in front. Process continues to repeat itself. New leaders come into USAREC and cannot understand why some of these former war heroes are not producing.

Good Noncommissioned Officers are putting their career on the line because in USAREC if your entity wasn't called, you must not be doing your job. This is the implied statement throughout USAREC. While serving as a First-Sergeant my biggest challenge was in building my company as a team. The reason it was my biggest challenge was because the whole system rewarded entities separate from their team or higher element. Therefore there were harsh feelings toward one another once I started espousing teambuilding. They were leery about helping someone else get to the top of the hill for fear that the favor would not be returned. Leaders would pull me to the side asking me to reassure them that their helping of another entity would be remembered during times of recognition. Initially I couldn't believe this. On visits to different recruiting stations, before leaving, I would ask the leader how they would feel about helping their peers. All expressed the same feeling. If it caused their peer to get ahead they would be reluctant

to do it. This is the sentiment that runs throughout recruiting. Unfortunately it is the norm and not the exception.

In conclusion I believe that this is not talked about or funded to study how to fix it because the eventual beneficiary is USAREC. Although the leaders will continue to have to answer questions about why good NCOs continue to take short cuts; I don't believe that this will be seriously addressed because unless it's done for the benefit of the Soldiers on the front lines of America, there really is no need to do it. The benefactor will not benefit in the short term but will in the long term. In the long term we will receive more of the top leaders that will want to work in a positive, creative, stimulating environment. Those that could really benefit will have PCS'd long before the results could be measured. Also, to not appear as an individual that can only spot a problem and then turn it over to someone else to fix I also propose a solution.

Ways that I propose to fix the current reward system in USAREC:

1. Realize that everyone can contribute but not everyone can be number one. An entity must be judged based on its potential. They should be told that their only competition is themselves. A unit at 55% new recruiters should not be told that they should be doing better because the Marines are doing

well in an area. This would take some research on the part of the leader-observer.

2. We must train everyone as if they are a leader. (How to think philosophy)

We currently have young NCOs in Iraq doing the jobs that Lieutenants used to do. We bring these same NCOs into recruiting and separate them from getting the big picture training that they were used to in their last MOS. We spoon feed them the same training (recruiter interview etc...) and will not switch until they decide to become 79R. Of course we treat them like babies and they end up playing that role. If we asked them why their leader has them working on a particular task they cannot tell us. They are doing it because that is what they were told to do.

3. Lastly we must identify those leaders that would greatly benefit the command by becoming 79R. These would be the same leaders that are already leading at the station level without the title. This is important to us because these leaders must lead other leaders. We are too quick to convert a leader because he or she can put people in the Army. Once they convert their job will become 90% leadership, 5% knowledge, 5% knowing where to find it.

I believe that by instituting these steps we can remedy a silent problem that has been preventing USAREC from arriving at its true potential. I

believe in the words that I have written, so when I leave the academy I will allow my self to be judged by them.