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Army Ethics Under Attack

MSG Richard H. Patterson

United States Sergeants Major Academy

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SGM James Lucero

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### Abstract

Leaders establish the ethical standards of their organization. The Army is a particularly unique and special organization due to the important nature of its business in defending our nation. We recruit Soldiers from all walks of society with different moral and ethical backgrounds and must remain vigilant in developing consistent ethical rules of law and standards that are non-negotiable. I argue that Army ethics is under attack by the minority extreme left and right of our society. The American media, business and political lobbyists, as well as numerous activist groups with little or no ethical standards have steadily influenced our political and strategic leadership over the past 20 years. The end result is an Army under attack by immorality.

### Army Ethics Under Attack

If during a field training exercise I accidentally but seriously damaged a nearly extinct and protected tree with my vehicle, should I tell someone at the expense of me being punished? Regardless of the whether you define ethics from the points of view of the intuitionist, empiricist, rationalist, or theologian, ethics is simply doing the right thing whether or not you are being watched. Simply put; doing the right thing or what ought to be done. Lately, many decisions and policies developed for Army personnel seem to wobble back and forth between absolute right as opposed to relative right. I believe that an effective Army must operate under precise laws, rules, policies, formations, and instructions in order to be successful in its mission. Ethics is synonymous with morality and is non-negotiable. Whether or not we like it, moral codes are based on religious absolutes. This country was built on traditional Christian values which led to the development of our laws and our constitution. Army ethics is under attack and we must address this crisis now.

Homosexuality is defined as emotional and sexual and emotional interest in someone of the same sex. In recent years, the extremely small minority of gays and lesbians stepped up their fight for the same rights as heterosexuals, however the Christian values of the majority condemned homosexual behavior as immoral and contrary to what is right about American families. In 1994, gay and lesbian activist groups lobbied enough to influence President Clinton's administration's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which gave gays the right to serve in the military. They are allowed to serve as long as they do not reveal their sexual orientation. How could an extremely small percentage of our population who are homosexuals or supporters of this horrific tendency influence the overwhelming majority? They attacked the ethical heart of our society; the Army. By desensitizing this distasteful act with a barrage of gay cartoons, gay

reality shows and movies, it is now okay to accept homosexuals with the lowest morality in an Army once viewed as having the most ethical rules and people in the world. Homosexuality is wrong and being right is non-negotiable.

The Army has always been an organization of standards; standards that compel its members to live at a necessary higher standard. The fanatic liberals of this country have crept among our ranks and continue to attack and break down the foundations of strict rules or laws regulating our standards of behavior. Let us examine the rule concerning adultery. According to the Manual for Courts Martial (MCM), adultery occurs when someone was accused of wrongfully having sexual intercourse with another person who is married or both are married to someone else. Adultery is immoral from the rule of law perspective, prejudicial to good order and discipline. Why does the administration of justice differ depending on the grade level of the accused? Is adultery wrong or right? It is widely known that junior level Soldiers who commit adulterous acts are normally seriously punished through the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The full extent of the law is exercised in more than 90 percent of all cases for junior Soldiers. Many senior leaders are either simply given a Field Grade or General Officer Letter of Reprimand, or told to retire. Do we have different levels of unethical behaviors based on your rank, or are unethical leaders with immoral beliefs continuing their attack on the rule of law of our Army?

Whenever we look at ethics and morality, fairness and consistency immediately comes to mind. To combat many ethical issues, the Department of Defense (DoD) developed the Joint Ethics Regulation. This regulation specifically prohibits the use of official authorized actions affecting personal financial matters. By this we mean Soldiers and Department of the Army (DA) civilians through any official capacity should not personally benefit financially through any

official business of the government other than through pay and/or bonuses. The United States Code established precedence for more than 150 similar cases under our rule of law. One example is the case of United States v. Shanda Turner. Turner was employed as a disbursing agent performing administrative functions in government. She was responsible for purchasing office supplies using the Government Purchase Card. In 2000, a vendor who Turner had purchased supplies from gave her a \$500 retail gift card. Turner was found guilty of one misdemeanor; unlawfully accepting money which supplemented her government wage. Turner was fined \$500.00 and an additional \$25.00 penalty, one year probation under supervision, and twenty hours of community service. Today, the rules remain the same. Policies prohibit official purchases from places such as COSTCO due to individual membership benefits, although it would save taxpayers billions. In December 2001, President Bush signed into law Fiscal Year 2002 National Defense Authorization Act. This Act allowed military as well as government civilian employees to legally receive promotional products or services such as frequent flyer miles earned while traveling under official orders on government business. The Joint Ethics Regulation, the Joint Federal Travel Regulation, and the Joint Travel Regulation were rewritten to authorize such practice. Is this not the same thing United States v Shanda Turner? Is personal financial gain achieved from official acts? Certainly! The only difference is that this rule of law change mostly benefits senior leaders of our Army. Are Army ethics under attack by business lobbyists concerned about acquiring increased business from DoD personnel who fly frequently?

In my humble yet passionate opinion, the most unethical act of any nation, organization, group, or the United States Army is to weigh monetary cost against the dignity of human lives. In examining the state of our military's health care system, it remains seriously underfunded, unprepared, inefficient, and ineffective to take care of our nation's best and brightest heroes.

Although our military health care system as well as its technological growth has improved since our archaic existence in 1775, the morality and integrity of our nation's legislators and military senior leaders remain in question. The drawdown immediately following the Gulf War and the end of the Cold War was one designed for a garrison environment. The current result of Operation Iraqi or Enduring Freedom is approximately 4,000 service members killed and over 25,000 injured. How many of the casualties or injured could be in a better situation if we were willing to fund the necessary care in Iraq or Afghanistan? Why do we have to medically evacuate so many service men and women out of Iraq and Afghanistan? Those precious moments wasted in flight could certainly have been used to save a life or limb. Is Landstuhl Army Hospital and Walter Reed sufficient facilities to support our war efforts now or in the future? In 1945, PVT Brown a nineteen year old Soldier who fought in WWII was injured by enemy shrapnel. He was twice read his last rites due to the severity of his wounds. Brown returned home to receive the best medical care promised our veterans, but was instead shorted. It wasn't until 1981 that Brown realized that his monthly disability check could not pay for the necessary care he needed. Although he was dubbed a member of the greatest generation, for 21 years he battled the government for proper compensation. He was also well aware that a large number of service members of that war had already passed. He stated in a letter to the judge overseeing his case that he was sure to die before a decision was made on his case. Mr. Brown died one year later and may not have known how prophetic his letter would be, because a decision was never made regarding his case. Thousands of other veterans have returned from WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, conflicts in Panama, and Desert Storm expecting the best of care for their heroic and honorable service. Today, many continue to battle our own government for disability benefits rightfully owed to them. Who are the political bean-counters attacking the very ethics of

our Army that attract so many proud patriots to serve this great nation?

### Conclusion

Our nation's ethical delusion clearly continues to permeate itself in the Army and the way we conduct business. The majority of those who wear the uniform believe in the absolute rule of ethics and we must challenge and stop the obvious influence and attack of the 'immoral' on the fabric of what makes our Army and our nation great. Good always triumph over evil.