

Running Head: ETHICAL CHALLENGES WITHIN THE RECRUITING PROCESS

Ethical Challenges within the Recruiting Process

MSG Walter Hampton

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SGM Robert E. Johnson

Abstract

There are many ethical obstacles within the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) and not much is preventing these challenges. Failure to prevent these challenges will only lead to the failure in our command. After completing my last tour as a First Sergeant and the NCOIC for the recruit the recruiter team, I have had the opportunity to reflect on my tenure in the recruiting organization. I now realize that based on some of the methods and many of the leadership techniques utilized to increase production could have very well contributed as multipliers that created the ethical dilemmas that our NCOs were confronted with everyday.

Ethical Challenges within the Recruiting Process

It is an honor to serve this country and provide the American people freedom. The Soldiers of the US Army comprised of over 230 years of proud tradition and service. We also make up over one hundred career specialties and over two hundred and thirty jobs; one of these jobs is as an Army Recruiter. Not every leader in recruiting has had the distinct pleasure of serving their country in combat, which however does not make the leader.

What gets under my skin though is how some of those leaders who have never been deployed talk to some of these brave warriors we have returning to serve a tour on recruiting duty. Here is an example, “You can fight in theater for your country and come back here to just be a failure“. You may even hear this; “You need to remember what you are recruiting for, and remember those brave Soldiers working all day and night in theater, they have not given up like you have“. These are just a few of the comments heard.

These comments heard from Sergeant First Class through Sergeants Majors, where do we draw the line to ensure mission success. Degrading a Soldier does not make an individual want to do more but less. First they may think they are failing later they look to blame the leader or they are family for their failure. Those leaders should refrain from degrading these brave souls; they have not walked a mile in their shoes. Other ways of getting a Soldier to work are available but it is always easy to do what you believe is right.

I took a stand against my Sergeant Major and defended my self and Soldiers. This did not go over well at first, I may have been wrong in the setting but I was right in my defense. I informed my leader that his comments were unwarranted and until he walked in my shoes or that

of my Soldiers do not reference unaccomplished missions to the war. I also stated that he has not walked in my shoes in theater or anyone of those Soldiers, and that he was doing more harm than good. This later had a trickling effect as he was hearing it from other combat leaders; he called me into his office and informed me to pull him to the side next time. His realization led the battalion commander to re-evaluate his approach as well; they now understood they had brave combat warriors who wanted to continue mission success. Their job was to use the warriors' strengths to get them there. Communication often leads to many ethical dilemmas; the question is who stands up and does the person in the dilemma learn from their mistakes.

There are many ethical challenges in the recruiting process. The recruiting process consists of the following: prospecting, processing, Future Soldier maintenance, and follow-ups. Army regulations should curtail and minimize the ethical challenges for the United States Army Recruiter. USAREC Regulation (UR) 601-45 discusses prohibited and regulated activities that safe guard the recruiting process. The Department of the Army (DA) regulates the qualifications for enlistment into the United States Army through Army Regulation (AR) 601-210 Enlistment Standards for the United States Army. Strict comprehension of the provided regulations and operating in the proper leadership environment this will reduce many of the ethical challenges that a NCO may encounter.

In the prospecting phase, recruiters are required to make phone calls and go out in the community to make appointments. Well trained and discipline Soldiers do not have problems accomplishing these tasks. The recruiting area is very large, so there is not direct supervision in their daily tasks. Some recruiters will go to the mall and play video games; others will go through the motion and call the same disconnected number. In some instances, recruiters contact applicants for the wrong reasons.

In the processing phase recruiters process applicants for enlistment if they are mentally and physically qualified. Recruiters under stress will start processing unqualified applicants so it looks like they are working. When under pressure recruiters have also concealed the applicant's law violations and medical problems, in which the applicant will later become a fraudulent enlistment.

Future Soldiers are required to keep in contact with their recruiters every two weeks and stay morally and physically qualified. The ethical dilemma recruiters run into is when they get behind and fail to make contact with their Soldiers. They will falsify documents and try to makeup the contacts later. This not only hurts the Soldier, but it can hurt the whole chain of command all the way up the Department of the Army if the Soldier fails to ship to Basic Training. Someone in the chain must investigate why the Soldier did not ship and it could take numerous hours or days to do the investigation.

In a well-organized unit, a healthy climate consists of high morale, strong esprit de corps, and a competitive environment that forces recruiters to want to win. In most units winning at all cost is how you survive. Winning in recruiting equates to making 100% of your mission. Winning is achieving the title of the Top Producer, Top Recruiter, Station Commander, Station, Company, or First Sergeant. If the recruiters understand that failure is an option within the command, then the NCOs will choose the hard right over the easy wrong.

Remember the United States Army Values Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage play an important role in all of our choices. Each one of the Army Values helps the recruiter reason with the possibilities of failure. An elevated value base in the recruiter and strong character will often steer the recruiter to make the right decision. However, we must reiterate values when a recruiting organization is trying to make its assigned

mission and even more so when the production is down. Firmly embracing values and understanding that failure is also healthy and will ultimately reduce personal and interpersonal conflict. Society, along with the lack of parental controls with the youth of America who are interested in joining the United States Army causes the process to become gray and filled with challenges in the ethical recruiting process.

Now the question is would experience and maturity decrease the probability of recruiters violating their Honor and Integrity while jeopardizing their careers in the performance of executing the recruiting process? That answer is also yes!

When the moral standards of our society decreases, we adjust, the Army regulations also change to compensate! Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) is a sore subject with most in our nation. When the United States Army casualties because of OIF increase our mission as a command goes up! When retention levels within the United States Army drop and we fail to make our retention mission as mandated by the United States Congress again our recruiting mission rises. Nevertheless, USAREC is a business. Therefore, when the market shifts Recruiting Commands strategy must also shift. When the market expands USAREC's personnel requirement increases. The factors of the market-shift and the personnel influx in itself can cause more problems. For example, we are already dealing with certain levels of immaturity within our selected recruiters. Recruiters lacking experience continue to cause both personal and interpersonal conflicts. However, the answer to increase the personnel strength within the command was to select younger and lesser-refined Corporal to perform the task of a recruiter.

Recommendations that I would make to the USAREC Commanding General is that all recruiters must have a minimum of six years of active federal service and no more than 12 years, a minimum age of 24, must be an E-5 or higher, only a two year commitment, and choice of duty

station afterward. My reasoning is simple. First, this will ensure the recruiters are a little more mature with some leadership experience, but not too much experience that it will hurt the Soldier or the Army. A two-year commitment will keep the Soldier competitive in their MOS, and many mistakes come often in the 3rd year. On the second year, the NCO becomes a master at the task and recruits to make the mission of the command. However, the third year NCOs start learning and taking shortcuts, shortcuts that sometimes may hinder the continued career of the NCO. By giving them, a station of choice afterward will reward Soldiers doing a difficult task outside their MOS, and recruiting will get more volunteers.

Lastly, we could simply do nothing. By choosing this option, it only continues to jeopardize our recruiters and our institution. My recommendation to best protect the recruiter, and strengthen our institution would be to shorten the tour as a recruiter. Do not allow extensions accept in exceptional cases where recruiters wish to convert and become 79Rs.

In conclusion, recruiters are our number one resource to accomplishing the mission set forth by the United States Army. They are also solely responsible for prospecting and processing enough Future Soldiers for the Army. If we do not make the recruiting goals then it falls on the retention recruiters to make up the difference. Overall, we do not have a choice but to make the accession mission to keep our Army up to strength to accomplish the worldly missions. We owe it to our NCOs to put control measures in place that will decrease ethical dilemmas, lessen the recruiting challenges and ultimately protect the integrity of the mission. Leaders must properly train and mentor the Soldiers from day one, and not allow them to falter from our Army values. If we do our jobs as leaders, Soldiers will do their jobs with honor, and always be morally, and ethically correct; without us the leaders losing our cool regardless of whether they have been or not been deployed to the current or previous conflicts.