

Running head: Some are rewarded, others are punished

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MSG Kevin D. McKinley

U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy

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SGM Steven Kern

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SOME ARE REWARDED, OTHERS ARE PUNISHED

Would you be inclined to follow a military leader who the Army has proven to be in violation, policy, or regulation because he/she violated military ethics? Non-commissioned officers struggle with military ethics while they support the command in order to accomplish the unit's mission. Morality and Ethics are very important issues in this country and in the military during these times of an extended conflict in Iraq where insurgents kill American and Coalition service members weekly. This paper discusses how I see the Non commissioned Officers role in this struggle of ethics versus mission accomplishment from the Consequentialism and Deontological points of view.

Consequentialism is the point of view that an action is ethical if it provides the greatest amount of happiness and the least amount of unhappiness to the greatest number of people.

Deontological ethics or deontology is a theory holding that decisions should be made solely or primarily by considering one's duties and the rights of others. One of the most important implications of deontology is that a person's behavior can be wrong even if it results in the best possible consequences. In contrast to consequentialism, deontology insists that how people accomplish their goals is usually (or always) more important than what people accomplish.

The NCO Creed states that, "I will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself" and "Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine". These tenets of the NCO Creed are what cause the ethical dilemmas for the NCO. Consider two scenarios under the consequentialism and deontological approach that many NCO's have encountered in recent years.

 *Scenario One*

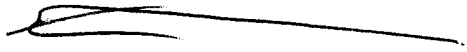
Scenario one has a Squad Leader that is charged with command and control of a four block sector in a neighborhood in Iraq. The squad leader is issued \$3000 US dollars per week to use in their sector to hire locals and pay informants. The squad leader does not have to provide any receipts or paperwork to show how the money is spent they just have to acknowledge that the money was spent in the community. The unit's money for Soldier comfort's such as showers, shelters, and cots have not yet reached the unit and will not reach the unit for months. Should the squad leader use some of the money that is assigned for the community to provide for basic needs of their Soldiers?

From the Consequentialism point of view the greatest good with the least amount of harm provided to the greatest amount of people would allow the squad leader to divert some of the money the community funds to buy Soldier needs. The NCO faces decisions such as this and they always shelter the officers in their unit from these actions because there is not any room for integrity or ethic violations in their position. NCOs in every unit has made decisions that have benefited the unit and their leaders applauded their efforts. The leaders expected the NCO to do whatever necessary to provide the materials needed for Soldier comfort and subsistence. The officers however do not want to have direct knowledge of where the funds came from to make the necessary purchases. The officer is concerned with the consequences of not having the materials more than the consequences of the NCOs actions. The officer is willing to overlook the deontological approach of fund expenditures unless leadership at another level reprimands the NCO in any form for the misdirection of those funds.

The NCO also understands the consequences of his inability to accomplish missions that others are able due to holding steadfastly to absolute ethics. Failure on the part of the NCO to

accomplish the mission could have an adverse effect on the unit in safety, morale, and most importantly readiness. Conversely, there is always an example where another NCO charged by the Army of ethics violations or another regulation for doing the exact same thing in the same or another nearby unit. What choice do you make? Some are rewarded, others are punished.

The Deontological point of view would say that the squad leader would not be able to divert the funds from one program to another without authorization. It is the duty of the NCO from the NCO Creed to “conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself” this suggests that under no circumstance should a NCO compromise their ethics.



Scenario Two

In scenario #2, consider a NCO assigned as a recruiter. The recruiter has been having a hard time getting applicants qualified to enlist due to minor medical problems from their childhood. Peer recruiters are having no problems getting their applicants qualified because they are briefing them on what not to say when they are taking the medical examination. Should the NCO follow the example of his / her peers and brief their applicants to withhold information in order to pass the medical examination or should he / she continue to struggle by listing each prior medical event in their past?

From the consequentialism point of view, “...the greatest good with the least amount of harm provided to the greatest amount of people...” would allow the NCO to brief the applicant on what would disqualify them from entrance into the military because of medical reasons. This would however, not include telling the potential applicant to withhold any medical history that would cause harm to themselves or others while serving in the military.

The Deontological point of view would strictly prohibit this because it would violate a regulation and would be contradictory to their duty to recruit with integrity. The Recruiting Command has zero tolerance for recruiters who commit indiscretions.

Recruiters are often accused of violations associated with advising applicants to withhold information in order to pass the medical examination. Publicly, the command discourages these actions but when surfaced, I feel the command views these accusations of minor violations of ethics as nuisances and generally very little effort is put into the investigation of these offenses. In fairness, the command has to weigh the word of the proven leader against the statement of an applicant unless there is a third party person to verify that the indiscretion occurred. The consequences of aggressively investigating each and every allegation would have an adverse effect on the recruiters ability to do their job with confidence that if falsely accused their leadership would support them until proven guilty.

Soldiers in the recruiting command know of fellow recruiters who are committing minor indiscretions in order to advise applicants what would disqualify them from joining the military. These recruiters are not only trying to make their mission but also trying to assist a young man or woman in need of a career, or a change in environment or lifestyle. The NCO knows that if the applicant does not enter the military their life could go in a negative direction if they did not have a structured environment to go into. The consequences of telling the applicant that they are disqualified could be the difference between a fulfilling life or a life filled with despair for many of America's youth.

Commanders in recruiting do not investigate what differentiates the successful recruiters from those that are struggling to meet their mission goals. Many key leaders are aware that minor

indiscretions occur daily in order to qualify applicants in what seems to be a standards that applied to society years ago but no longer today.

Army Ethics and Values has no room for the types of ethical decisions that NCO's make daily in order to accomplish the missions palced on them by commanders at all levels. In a time where people, money, supplies and time are all in short supply and mission failure is never an option , the call of "get it done" is always the charge given to the NCO. Leaders whether Officer or NCO know that this may cause the NCO or Soldier to make an ethical decision that if it were scrutinized under the microscope of the law it would be in violation of a regulation or policy. Conversely, when the NCO refuses to perform the "get it done" action there are seen as incompetent, unwilling to support the chain of command, and a person that is not an asset to the command. The NCO or Soldier trustworthiness or loyalty is questioned which basically ends their career in that unit.

The military law is written in plain black and white. The charge of accomplishing the Army's mission in all environments within the law is a challenge that every leader must face and the NCO is and always has been the operator on the ground to straddle the fence bewteen success and failure when it comes to the ethical decisions that must be made. My advice to any NCO is to follow the NCO Creed, but at all times know the left and right limits that you have to accomplish the mission and act in a way to ensure the welfare of your troops without bringing embarrassment on the Army. We cannot forget that accomplish of the mission and welfare of the troops are the two basic Army tenets that we cannot fail.

The American public expects it is military to win all wars and serve as role models for American society. They are however unaware of the struggles that NCOs endure with military ethics while he /she support the command in order to accomplish the unit's mission.