

United States Army Sergeant Major Academy Standards

Scott K. Tsuda, SGM, 18Z5HW9

USASMA, Ft. Bliss, TX, 04 Aug 06 to TBD

20 Nov 06

United States Sergeants Major Academy

Class 57

Abstract

The United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) has no standards other than what I feel skewed by the USASMA chain of command. Standards: all which is judged and compared. The U.S. Army has standards of conduct, performance, evaluation, the list is endless. Every day we as Humans are judged according to some kind of standard, credit, education, even social. This academy is run by the adage, "do as I say, not as I do."

Ethics

As the Army moves into the 21st century, we as Senior Non-Commission officers will be the role models for future generations of soldiers to come. Our Ethics and moral values become that of future generations. As such, we must re-evaluate what it is that makes us professionals, what it is that we believe in. The Webster's dictionary states, "Ethics. 1. The study of the general nature of morals and the specific moral choices an individual makes in relating to others. 2. The rules or standards of conduct governing the members of a profession." Lead, follow or get out of the way.

USASMA Standard Start with the U.S. Army Standards

All soldiers in the U.S. Army adhere to many kinds of standards. These standards enforce performance, legal, moral, and ethical behavior during duty, and off duty hours. Officers, warrant officers, and enlisted are judged by these standards. It's these standards which all U.S. Army officers, warrant officers, and enlisted, rank promotions are based. This begins upon entry into the U.S. Army, and ends when we leave the U.S. Army. It is a standard that increases as we move up in rank. It is this higher standard in which all senior officer, warrant officer, and enlisted service member must adhere too. It's one of the reasons why service members follow our leadership, because we set the highest and most professional example.

Top Two Percent

From day one in processing at the USASMA we were told that, "we were the top two percent of our Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) within the U.S. Army". A number of us realized right off the bat that it was nothing more than propaganda. During the first couple of days, examples of improper conduct were seen from many within the USASMA class. Conduct we as senior officers, enlisted, or warrant officer would not tolerate.

U.S. Army Height and Weight Standards

One specific example would be service members showing up to USASMA not within the standards of Army Regulation 600-9. These service members had almost one year to prepare for in processing, yet they failed to meet U.S. Army standards at time of in processing. These service members who failed the height and weight standards are still in the Sergeant Majors Course (SMC) today. Are these who failed the height and weight standards considered in the top two percent of their MOS. What kind of message are they sending to the rest of the Army?

Physical Fitness

Physical fitness speaks for itself, either you can pass an Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) or you can't pass an APFT. If you can't you should not be allowed to remain in the course. Yet we have personnel still in the SMC course.

Right place and Right Time

Third, is seeing Sergeant Majors (SGM) and Master Sergeants (MSG) being late to appointed place of duty. This happens every time there is a briefing in the east auditorium. And it is just one example of being in the right place at the right time. The leadership of the class, nor the staff and faculty of USASMA knows how to deal with this problem, or they just wishes it will go away. They deal with it, by idol treats. Is this the way good leaders deal with problems?

Early Release from the Course

Last year students where allowed to leave the SMC early to report to their units getting ready to deploy. Departures were during the month of April, which meant that these students would have missed at least 80 hours if not more of the SMC. If completion of the whole SMC is not required to graduate, then why keep the rest of the students here at the academy till May. Let every one graduate in April

Do as I Say, Not as I Do

The forth point is the do as I say, not as I do mentality. Of all the examples that I have listed prior, this example by far is the most non excusable one of them all. Rules of the auditorium, no chewing gum, bringing food, drink, or work into the auditorium. Great rule if all staff, faculty, and students followed. Of course, we the students get ostracized for any violation while staff and faculty is over looked. No hazing, we as students get a tongue lashing for hazing, staff and faculty is again overlooked. No dipping of smokeless tobacco other than in designated smoking areas, staff and faculty dipping inside of buildings. These are just an example of the do as I say, not as I do rules of the USASMA. Is this the standards of leadership that USASMA enforces, and is teaching to the students? It is not within the standards of the U.S. Army values.

Moral Choice

A specific moral choice an individual makes in relating to others is an individual's choice. As Senior Non-Commissioned officers we have a duty to mentor our subordinates in the ways of the Army. To teach them to make the right choices even when it would be easier to bend the rules or take a short cut. We as senior enlisted need to step in and guide subordinates to do the right thing when they are in doubt of what is right. It is not always the hard right over easy wrong. It can be the easy right over the wrong. If we do the right thing and no one is around will anyone know? That is what Ethics is all about; if no one is around will we do the right thing.

The rules or standards of conduct governing the members of a profession. What are these rules? They are the rules and regulations that govern our conduct as we go about our duties. Some, if not all are written down, while others are those inherent standards, the norms that we have had ingrained in our personalities and characters. As a Sergeant Major, we have all faced this question at one time or another. We have observed our fellow Officers and Non-Commissioned

Officers put in situations were they have had to make these choices. How they made their decision is a direct reflection on the leaders that they grew up under. In these times of downsizing and shrinking dollars we are all going to have to do our part to reevaluate those attitudes that in the past were okay. Like the TDY trip, that in reality, we could have done on the phone. Traveling on the cheaper airlines, instead of traveling on the airline that we will get the most bonus mileage for our trip. When we go to visit the troops in the field we take along a cot or we request sleeping arrangements with the troops instead of a hotel downtown. We as senior leaders sometimes lose site of the fact that being promoted into positions of leadership mandates we lead from the front. We must always remember that we are leader's first and manager's second. We must set the example by picking up the torch and moving out in front to lead. Many have risen to these positions and blinded by the excesses of those that went before them. But let us not forget that we are always under a microscope by those that we lead and mentor. Do not be self-deceived into believing that they do not observe our actions. Once you have done the action, it is no time to try it again. There will always be someone there to point out our mistakes. We must live with the outcome of those actions and be judged by them. We must also take into account that it is not just the soldiers we lead that judge us by our actions. But the public that pays the bills.

In these times of lower budgets, the public and the news media have us under a microscope. It is the U.S. public that pays the bills and they have the right to expect, that as professionals we will handle ourselves in an ethical and moral way. It is for this reason that they have entrusted their sons and daughters in our charge.

Conclusion

For the future of America, it is on our shoulders to instill those values in the soldiers that we lead. But first we must look within ourselves and determine if we meet that standard. Then judge ourselves to that standard. If we do not feel that we are up to it, then it is up to us to change ourselves so that we can meet that standard. So that once we meet that standard then it will be up to us to instill it into those we lead.