

In the News Today, Army has Dilemma

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Abstract

Every Soldier in the Army must have values that support the Army's values. The entire organization must live by a strict code of conduct to ensure the success of its mission. The standard is known and recognized by American citizens, corporations, and foreign armies, but let an Abu Ghurayb prison incident, or the misconduct of a recruiter happen, and all is forgotten. The United States media's inability to investigate and report facts accurately have created a huge dilemma for the leadership of the Army – Do we fight this war based on keeping high public opinion; or do we fight the most effective way possible, and take our chances with the press.

In the News Today, Army has Dilemma

The Army's ethics are beyond reproach. The Soldier's commitment and dedication to duty support the responsibility of defending this great nation. The average new recruit enters the Army with basic values that are conducive to the Army's Values: Loyalty; Duty; Respect; Selfless Service; Honor; Integrity; Personal Courage (LDRSHIP). The professional environment of the Army influences Soldiers to adopt LDRSHIP as their own values. Yet we still face the greatest dilemma of all time, the American Media.

Setting the Standard.

Many corporations and foreign armies desire the ability to develop corporate values as effective as those of the U.S. Army. The Army has over one million Soldiers assigned, but allow a few Soldiers, or even 100 Soldiers (less than 0.01% of the force), to do something improper - it is all over the news - the Army is unethical. Don't take this wrong, freedom of speech is a constitutional right, and our Soldiers are willing to die for it and many other freedoms that Americans take for granted. I just ask the press to report the facts, and to keep the activity in context.

Can you imagine if the media associated every unethical act committed in the United States with the city that it happened in? The news would report; Detroit upholds gang violence; Los Angeles endorses police brutality; New York City approves of inflation of quarterly earnings. Better yet, civilian organizations scrutinized for member's personal activity; Catholic Priests are petafiles. Can you imagine? Statistically speaking, Soldiers are the ideal models for American citizens. The average Soldier is more educated than the average citizen; the Army has an extremely low crime rate, and Veterans are recognized nationally for the work ethics and values

they possess. A Soldier is considered one of the noblest professions in the United States, yet every time something negative hits the press, the complete organization gets crucified?

Abu Ghurayb Prison.

When the press revealed the scandals of the Abu Ghurayb prison, the integrity of the entire Army was questioned by the world. The actions of a select few gave the Americans a black eye. While the Army was engaged in a new type of warfare (winning the support and confidence of the Iraqi people), the focus became strictly these scandals. Although the other 99.99 percent of the Army was doing great things for the country, the media reported nothing else positive about the war. With the media influencing the world to believe the Army was this corrupt, the coalition took a major set back in combating terrorism.

Recruiting.

Just recently the Army Recruiting Command came under fire for their recruiting tactics. Recruiters were caught lying to potential recruits; individuals undercover recorded recruiters telling interested applicants false statements. One recruiter told an applicant she would not have to go to war. Another went as far to say the war was over. Again, the exception got portrayed as the norm. Is this the standard for the Army? Does the Army believe that applicants eligible for recruitment are so gullible?

We are a volunteer Army engaged in a long war that must be fought, but in order to do so, we must maintain the force. Our recruiters are challenged with selling the life of a Soldier to a nation that doesn't agree with the war. The Army had to adjust their recruiting strategy to allow for a larger audience for possible recruitment. Policies for tattoos, maximum entrance age, and height and weight standards were changed solely for this benefit.

Journalism

With America tracking the war through news programs and papers, one might wonder what is going on or who is winning. We know when American Warriors are killed, but it appears through journalism that the coalition force isn't effective. When the press tells the story, our strategic bombings are always on schools or Mosques, and in the urban environment, we only kill innocent civilians. With these types of reports coming from American journalist, can the coalition ever be effective with counterinsurgency? Imagine how a redeploying Warrior might feel when he or she returns. Our fallen comrades deserve the truth be told.

American journalism is suppose to be based off of investigative reporting, yet the facts always seem to be left out. I can't imagine that reporters couldn't find some success stories while investigating the war. Every news agency has a subject matter expert that quickly points out what went wrong and speculates why, but where is the positive side? If they all have the answers, why don't they share them with the Department of Defense, or better yet, volunteer to make to make the difference. As Soldiers continue to make the ultimate sacrifices for our country, journalism continues to report stories that question our purpose and effectiveness. It brings doubt to the world that the Army's efforts are worthwhile and for the greater good of mankind.

Conclusion

The dilemma I have described could be debated as that of the Army or of the American press, but you must consider what this great nation stands before deciding. Although we the Army do not always agree with the media, it is every American Citizen's right to know what is going on, and to express their own opinion. As an organization, we must strive to live up to the

expectation of our people, and take responsibility for our actions. We must make every effort to do what is right, morally and ethically.

The Army can expect the media to continue reporting their views to our society and the world, but the projected impact on the Army is up to us. We must understand that we are accountable to the people, and that we can't cover up any negative incidents, or delay sharing news with the press; holding back information only adds to the problem. Americans would have much more trust in its military if it disclosed an incident up front, verses it being discovered by the press. By being upfront, we show the world we are aware of what is going on in the ranks, and we can take a proactive role in fixing it. While we the Army can't prevent the press from publishing their stories, we as leaders in the Army can set the example for our Soldiers and the American people. It is our Army, and we are responsible for everything that happens within our organization.