

Running Head: You Can't Count to Five

You Can't Count to Five

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### Abstract

Military cadences are a rich part of our great military history. Numerous cadences sung today do not promote that rich heritage. Military cadences should promote pride and esprit de corps in soldiers and units. Military cadences should promote good order and discipline. Cadences that promote lawlessness and that do not promote the Army values we live by should not continue within our ranks. Today, we have the smartest and brightest soldiers in this all-volunteer force, not the dregs of society. Leaders should not tolerate cadences that call for the killing of innocent civilians or cadences that degrade the quality of soldiers within our ranks.

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### You Can't Count to Five

Military cadences are a rich part of military history and tradition, should cadences that do not promote good order and discipline continue since the army has the smartest and brightest soldiers in its ranks; military cadences should promote pride and esprit de corps? One, two, three, four, you can't count to five, one, two, three, four, cuz, your brain is fried, on crack, and dope, and all that shit you smoked, crack baby! This cadence is one example of cadences that do not promote Army values, good order and discipline, and does not esteem the quality of soldiers that serve in our Army today. Military cadences are a rich part of military history but cadences that do not promote good order and discipline should not continue within our ranks.

### History of Military Cadences

Military cadences have been around since the days of the Revolutionary war where soldiers marched with pride singing "Yankee Doodle" about the Redcoats whom they had defeated. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again" often sung during the civil war would motivate both Yankee and Rebel soldiers. At the turn of the century, "Over There" and "The Caisson Song" were favorites among soldiers. "The Army Goes Rolling Along," the official Army song, compels soldiers to "count off the cadence loud and strong" (Soldiers Magazine 1995).

A military cadence or cadence call sung by military personnel while running or marching is a traditional call-and-response work song. Cadences are referred to as Jody calls or Jodie's, after a fictional character in traditional cadences. Instruments are not required for cadence calling; the military march is oral military folklore. A call and response structure, military cadences are initiated by one soldier and the remaining soldiers complete the cadence, this instills camaraderie and teamwork. Cadence calling is to the beat and rhythm of the running pace

or the normal speed march. Maintaining the correct beat and cadence keeps soldiers “dressed” while marching or running in formation (Military Cadence 2007).

These work songs were referred to as “cadences” because of the number of steps a runner or marcher took per minute. The sergeant who sung the cadence or a drummer affected the travel speed of soldiers. The cadence count served other purposes: for example, the close-order drill used during the Revolutionary war simplified the loading and firing of the musket. Baron von Steuben from the Revolutionary War, greatly aided our military with European battlefield techniques (Military Cadence 2007).

#### Pride and Esprit De Corps

SMA Preston stated, “That we should take pride in knowing that we are the greatest Army in the world. There are militaries around the world attempting to develop their own NCO Corps to look like ours. These militaries know the benefits of a strong NCO corps where small units and platoons execute missions simultaneously. We should take pride in our uniform, set the example for our soldiers, and never speak negatively about the Army. NCO’s should: be the standard, know the standard, and enforce the standard”.

The cadence “You can’t count to five” does not instill pride and esprit de corps in a unit. It does not promote the “Warrior ethos” nor does it support the “Army values”. It speaks negatively about the quality of soldiers in our ranks. We have the smartest and brightest soldiers in our ranks today; they are not the dregs of society. Many soldiers have joined the military to get away from the lifestyle propagated by this particular cadence.

On numerous occasions, this particular cadence, often sung while marching to or from change of command ceremonies or division reviews where dignitaries, family members, and friends are present. How does this cadence promote pride and esprit de corps at any one of these

events rich in military tradition? Does the Noncommissioned Officer Corps have the moral fiber to put an end to cadences that do not promote Army values?

#### Good Order and Discipline

SMA Preston stated, "Authority of the sergeant is circumvented when a more senior leader fails to lead by example and demonstrate the established standard. When an immediate leader in the chain of command demonstrates a lesser standard, how can the Sergeant enforce a standard with their little piece of the Army? Sergeants stop making the on the spot corrections with their sphere of influence when this happens. Standards are no longer enforced once the fundamentals are no longer enforced. We realize we have gone to far when a serious accident or death occurs".

Noncommissioned Officers are the standard-bearers and the "Backbone" of the Army. As Noncommissioned Officers, we should not tolerate cadences that do not promote good order and discipline. Cadences that call for the murder of innocent civilians in the market place, murdering of children in the playground, pulling out the machete and begin to chop, all violate good order and discipline. These cadences promote violating the laws of war, we as leaders, would not tolerate this behavior on the battlefield. In fact, any soldier involved in the murder of innocent civilians can expect prosecution. Promoting this behavior while running or marching is intolerable. Soldiers must have it instilled in them that singing cadences that promote unlawful behavior does not support Army values.

#### Pride in a Unit

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Casey stated, "This organization is regarded as the best in the world and he was proud to be taking charge of it. I have observed the men and women of our military in action in the most demanding combat environment for the past several years. I am

proud of the commitment, competence, and courage, of our civilians and Soldiers. You epitomize what is best about America and the ideals that made this country great”

Does singing the cadence “you can’t count to five” instill pride in a unit? Following a run with the Fort Bliss Post Commander, Major General Lennox, six-hundred fifty Master Sergeants and Sergeant Majors approached the commander’s location singing this cadence. The top one percent of our Army, assembled here at the Sergeant Majors Academy, cannot march without singing this cadence. The top one percent of our Army promotes and tolerates this cadence. It is no wonder this cadence continues within our ranks when senior Noncommissioned Officers fail to abolish a cadence that does not promote good order and discipline.

#### Conclusion

There is no doubt that military cadences are a rich part of military history but cadences that do not promote good order and discipline should not continue within our ranks. Noncommissioned Officers, the backbone of the army should not tolerate cadences that degrade the quality of soldiers within our ranks and cadences that promote lawlessness. Military cadences are a rich part of military history and tradition, should cadences that do not promote good order and discipline continue since the army has the smartest and brightest soldiers in its ranks; military cadences should promote pride and esprit de corps?

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