

Running Head: INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING

Initial Entry Training

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### Abstract

In a time where numbers and money hold more weight than standards is a time when we as the senior leaders and the Army as a whole need to look how we conduct business. I understand that doctrine at all levels is a guide to ensure all missions are completed but where does the compromise of standards fall into place. Initial Entry Training is the start of one's military career and one's exposure to the military. To have standards compromised so early in one's career sets a poor example of standards from the beginning. I will not try to defend the driving factors that lead to the lack of ethical dilemmas, I will just address that they are out there.

## Initial Entry Training

Ethical dilemma's and problems are in the eyes of the beholder. One person's dilemma could have no relevance to the person to the right. The ethical problem I believe the Army has faced since the Army went to an all-volunteer force is the Initial Entry Training (IET). I believe I am qualified to speak on this topic since I have experienced it from five separate stages. I was never a recruiter so I will not prosecute, defend or begin to tell you their job, but I was a recruit and I will speak from that point of view. At the time, I signed on the dotted line, and I understand every recruiter and person for that matter is different but I can only speak on my experiences. I was taking classes in architectural design and ensured by my recruiter as a Combat Engineer I would be dealing with blue prints all the time, I have not seen a blue print since. What does that have to do with ethics? Well I believe ethics and ethical behavior is a direct reflection of your beliefs, morals and values. I am not questioning my recruiters' morals because I believe you compromise your ethics sometimes for the greater good. Therefore, if he believed that it was more important to make mission and build the force by one ensuring the freedom of all others continue then he was on a mission, and that was what he needed to justify his compromise.

I will continue on to my trip to the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS). My first encounter of human cattle herding, this is where I first lost my name and became a number. The first doctor I encountered did the typical poking and prodding, the result he said I had a heart murmur. After he informed me of this shocking news, I waited in another line to wait to see another doctor. There was no hurry at this point so the hurry up and wait technique was not yet introduced. When I finally seen the second doctor he stated I was good. No explanation, no

confirming with the other doctor to ensure they were on the same sheet of music. My heart murmur was no more. I guess I was good because I am still here and Major Trevino has cleared me. This scenario will come about again as my years and experiences grow.

The next three views I believe I am more qualified to speak on, the first being the Initial Entry Training Soldier going through basic training and advanced individual training. Secondly, the Drill Sergeants point of view as I executed two plus years on the trail. Thirdly, I had the pleasure of being a First Sergeant of a One Station Unit Training (OSUT) company.

Therefore, what did I see when I was a young private, well not much. I enlisted when I was a junior in high school and went to basic during the summer of my junior year. Even with the fear factor in place, I could tell that compromising of standards was happening. I was without the knowledge of any Army Regulations, but on my lowest level I could see that when I was training and testing on equipment and the tasks presented to me others were driving the duty truck or performing other odd jobs for the Drill Sergeants. I could have sworn they said if you miss training or do not test on all tasks you would not graduate. Therefore, you can imagine my surprise when they were sitting next to me in the theater and walking across the stage with me. What made the standards come into question for me remained unanswered until I became a seasoned Soldier and ultimately becoming a Drill Sergeant.

When I received orders for Drill Sergeant, I had mixed emotions. Was it an honor for selection for this prestige assignment or was I in for the most trying two plus years of my life. Drill Sergeant School was no different then any other school I had encountered, to include basic training all the way to the Sergeants Major Academy. The initial impression I always get is being overwhelmed. In Basis it was the learning the smart book cover to cover. Drill Sergeant School it was the modules. Sergeants Major Academy it is all these writing assignments. It is

the statement that I heard, here at the academy that makes me think, “no one has ever failed academically”. Is it just getting through the unwanted stress, even though you aware you would make it? I will share some unethical behavior before I continue with my main point of compromising standards, which question ethical behavior.

While performing duties as a Drill Sergeant it is hard to believe the power you gain from the “Brown Round” or the campaign hat. It is not only a fear factor but it is instant form of respect especially from an IET Soldier. When a Drill speaks, their word is law. Therefore, there would be no questions when informing the privates that rent is due from living in the barracks, or that their monthly breast exams are due. My favorite is the fundraisers that made this company enough to purchase a pontoon boat at the Lake of the Ozarks. These are all serious violations of the Armies Regulations as well as cut dry violations of anyone’s ethical values. The ethical dilemma I will present is not using the fear or position for personal gain it is a dilemma of not withholding the standards. When a Soldier comes to Basic and Advanced Individual Training there are non-negotiated tasks that are mandatory, and done to a standard. The problem is what becomes more important, the fifteen thousand dollars it cost from when the Soldier first signs his name on the dotted line. Is it the attrition rate the chain of command refuses to see under a certain rate? On the other hand, is it just easier to pass someone then to invest the time and effort to re-train or endure the headaches and long process of chaptering a Soldier out for being unable to adapt. As my time as a Drill Sergeant and my time as a First Sergeant in a training environment, I have seen and heard these ethical dilemmas repeatedly. The problem is how lightly they are taking. From the reception station where I pick up Soldiers and the chain of command are aware of medical or mental issues and they still send them. To where a Drill Sergeant will count repetitions that clearly, do not meet the standard on an Army Physical

Fitness Test. Company Commanders will sign off that Soldiers made and met all training requirements when they know for a fact they did not. Do we not stop it because we are an all-volunteer Army, would we be able to maintain an all volunteer Army if we did not compromise of morals, values and beliefs? I do not either believe that from the time one signed that dotted line until wherever they are now in their career they did comprise their ethical standards or allow someone else to with their knowledge it was happening.

### Conclusion

To summarize a Soldier's first experience with an ethical dilemma is to learn from the mistakes of those before you. Standards are neither a money nor numbers game. By looking the other way, it might cost more money and numbers, meaning lives in the end. Ethical dilemma is having the intestinal fortitude to stand up when something is wrong, whether or not you are going against the norm or your superiors. It is also a breach in ethics if you have cardinal knowledge of something as minor as allowing someone to receive a go when that individual does not attempt or accomplish that task to standard.