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Army Ethics Paper

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All professions must have codes of ethics, for it is in observing such obligations that one becomes a member of the profession. There can be no military profession without a code of ethics. What makes the military's sense of ethics different from the ethics of the rest of the society is precisely the requirement of service instead of self-interest. As long as the Army is to remain a profession, its members, and the profession itself must put the service of our country and their people above self-interest.

Leaders in Iraq have to deal with ethical dilemmas on a daily bases. The dynamics of the battlefield and the types of missions units are performing in Iraq makes it very important for leaders to understand about ethics. My time deployed to Iraq with the 2d BDE, 25th ID (L) for Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF II), we faced many situations that put us in an ethical dilemmas while trying to take care of our Soldiers.

In order for a leader to understand this topic of Ethics, they must know what the words mean. The American Heritage Dictionary defines Ethics as, "(1.) A principle of right and good conduct, (2.) A system of moral principles or values, (3.) the study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by individuals in his relationship with others, (4.) the rules or standards governing the conduct of the members of a profession." The definition of dilemma in the American Heritage Dictionary states, "(1.) A situation that requires one to choose between two equally balanced alternatives (2) a predicament that seemingly defies a satisfactory solution." During this article, I will give you some examples of situations that by following these definitions helped me and my battery develop solutions to ethical dilemmas.

The subject of pre-deployment training requirements for units deploying for OIF or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) has become an issue for some units. Every Soldier who

deploys into one of those theaters of operations must complete certain training requirements. These tasks are important for Soldiers to know so they will be better prepared to operate in these areas. Every company level commander must send up a by name report to their battalion headquarters stating every Soldier has completed this training. This is not happening in some units due to competing demands and a shortage of time. These units are either sending up false reports or their battalion headquarters is not tracking them properly. Whatever the reason they are disobeying this portion of the operation's order.

My old unit Alpha Battery, 2d Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment received three new Soldiers a month before we were scheduled to leave for OIF II in January 2004. The battalion had just completed all the mandatory training requirements for its deployment into theater. The unit's equipment was already gone and we were going to start block leave for the holidays. Our commander wanted to give these new Soldiers the opportunity to take leave prior to leaving too. He thought that since we were short personnel in some of our howitzer sections and our mission had us convoying 600 plus miles through Iraq to get to our area of responsibility (AOR). He wanted them to leave with our main body and help man our crew serve weapons. I understood why he wanted to take these Soldiers; with them, we could operate three out of six howitzer sections completely. On the other hand, these Soldiers just finished Basic and Advance Individual training and did not complete the training every individual Soldier was supposed to have prior to deploying. If we put them on leave and did not conduct this training, my commander would have to send up a false report to higher. I recommended to my commander that we do not give them leave and conduct the training then. This way we could meet the training requirement and still have them for the convoy. I felt that this was the correct way to handle this situation. My commander did not want to take my recommendation at first. He felt

that by not giving them leave we would not be taking care of them. Once I explained that not giving them the training and having them deploy was putting them and the rest of the Soldiers in the Battery at risk. He finally came to the understanding that Soldiers' completing the training while we were on leave was taking care of them.

Another subject that has caused some junior leaders to have an ethical dilemma is Force Protection. Every leader is taught in his or her formal military education that accomplishing the mission and taking care of Soldiers is the most important things they do. One area instructors never tell them about during those lessons is that sometimes in combat these two rules conflict with each other. The conflicting elements of taking care of Soldiers and completing your unit's missions happens all the time in Iraq. The overall mission of the military in Iraq is to provide an environment where the people of Iraq can establish a democratic government. During our unit's rotation to OIF II, an area that took up most of our resources and time was protecting the Iraqi Police force and securing voting sites for their upcoming elections. We were spending over one hundred thousand dollars a month on materials and contractor fees to fortify police headquarters and voting sites for Iraqi personnel. The money we were receiving was only for Iraqi projects. Units could not spend this money on improving force protection measures for United States Forces.

The area our brigade's Soldiers were living in received rocket attacks nightly. My battery and the brigade's engineer company lived in the same area. We requested funds from the brigade's S4 to hire local contractors to fill Hesco barriers and purchase concrete barriers to provide protection around the containers our Soldiers lived in. The answer we received from the S4 was there was not any money available. Nevertheless, everyday we would go out the gate and spend it on Iraqi projects. Our Soldiers could not understand how money was available for

those projects that protected Iraqi civilians but was not for theirs. The rockets kept landing closer and closer to our living area and everyday we would send up request for funds. Finally, the insurgents got lucky, hit our living area, and wounded several of our Soldiers. The next day money and resources became available for force protection measures. We felt that it was a day late and a dollar short. How does the company leadership explain to the Soldiers and their families that it was more important to fund Iraqi force protection issues and not for them? This experience taught our brigade leadership the importance of managing its resources more effectively so we can accomplish its missions and take care of Soldiers at the same time. I only wish we could have learned it before they got hurt.

Leaders sending Soldiers out on missions daily, putting them in harms way when they never leave the safety of the Forward Operation Base has become a major issue. These leaders will volunteer their units for tough back-to-back missions so they can look good. They do not care about their Soldiers and it shows. Junior leaders in these units must development the ability to comfort them or this type of behavior will ruin a unit if not corrected quickly.

As a Sergeant Major, you will face tough decisions that will put Soldiers in harms way. We must understand the importance of making sound ethical decisions. We must never put ourselves in a situation where are decisions can be questioned. We must set the example for our Soldiers to follow.