

Running Head: Relationships between Officers and Enlistees

Relationships between an Officer and a Gentleman

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23 October 2007

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Class Number 58

Officer and Enlisted Relationship

Even though the United States Army Policy was established to prevent fraternization and other relationships between the ranks, I think the Army policy on an officer and enlisted relationships are subhuman. This is because most engagements happen when not in uniform, so there is no way for one to know that the other is an enlistee or an officer. I think individual relations happens most on attractions not rank, grade or position. If a female officer goes to a specific culture club far from a military post, that she enjoys and have a few drinks with her closes friends on a Friday night and meets a male enlisted Soldier without knowledge. They laugh at each other jokes and have a good conversation on individuals that is in the club or sport events that are happening in the world today. A few hours go by and neither person brings up the fact that he or she is in the military. At the end of the night, they go out for breakfast and the two ends up at a friend's house.

They spend the entire weekend together drinking and dancing, partying from club to club. The female officer just completed four years at WestPoint University and six months of Officer Basic course (OBC). She could not wait for this time of her life to come where she could be on her own and did not have to listen to anyone about a curfew. The entire weekend goes by, they are drawn to each other's attraction, and having the best time they have had in the past five years, this is done without discussing work or martial status. On Sunday, they went to dinner and the discussion came up about what did to bring monetary into their accounts and where they work at, and this is when the two discovered that both of them were Soldiers, one was an officer and the other was an enlisted. They finish their dinner and left with a since of concern on the both of their faces.

They questioned each other, what do we do about this or how can we stay together if we can, what trouble can we get into for having relations with each other. The officer asked the enlistee "can I lose my commission because of this," and the enlistee was concerned about his future assignment and how his leadership was going to treat him after finding out about this situation. What should they do at this point? This is an ethics issue. I will now use the definition out of Webster's dictionary. (Webster 2002) defines "ethics" as (1) the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation (2) (a) a set of moral principles or values (b) a theory or system of moral values (c) the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group (d) a guiding philosophy. When Soldiers arrive to then entrance training the United States Army spends many hours enforcing this individual trait into every person. We expect all of our Soldiers to be able to make sound decisions whether they are under strict leadership or out alone. Alone with having an understanding about ethics the new army policy Army Regulation

600-20, dated June 2006, gives many circumstances of a clear and concise definition about officer and enlistee relations in the United States Army. The old policy did not go into detail or cover officer and enlisted relationships, it covered the fraternization portion. In which, this was where a Soldier could not date or have intimate relations with some one in their chain of command. It covered most of what is explained in the new policy but not in detail. Every unit was supposed to post the new policy somewhere feasible so all Soldiers could review it and the unit was suppose to train their subordinates on the changes that took place within the new policy. Every unit had a specific period to report their status to the next higher command on the training event and new enlistee recruits are being taught this at every basic and advance course prior to departing to their new unit. Officers are being taught this in officer candidate school (OCS) and ROTC programs. Before I go further lets take a look at what AR 600-20 says about officer and enlistee relations and how Webster defines ethics.

AR 600-20, para 4-14, Relationship between Soldiers of different rank explains that certain types of personal relationships between officers and enlisted personnel are prohibited. Prohibited relationships include- (1) Ongoing business relationships between officers and enlisted personnel. This prohibition does not apply to landlord/tenant relationships or to one-time transactions such as the sale of an automobile or house, but does apply to borrowing or lending money, commercial solicitation, and any other type of on-going financial or business relationship. Business relationships which exist at the time this policy becomes effective and that were authorized under previously existing rules and regulations, are exempt until March 1, 2000 (Army Pubs, 03). Dating, sharing living arrangements other than that explained by working conditions, and sexual intercourse between officers, and senior or junior enlisted personnel are prohibited. This was one of the things that changed in this policy because at one time this was not an issue within the United States Army. The only exception to this new policy is when one of the enlistee personnel transitions from enlisted to an officer by going through OCS or another transition point into the officer corp.

The above policy explains to the chain of command about relationships between Soldiers of different ranks who may find themselves in an awkward situation like the one above with the officer and enlistee. The individuals involved in the situation above are not the only ones who will have to make an ethical decision whether or not to get married or break it off now, but both chain of commands will have to address the same issue. Should appropriate or unprofessional relationships occur, commanders have available a wide range of responses. They can counsel the individuals, reprimand them, order to cease, reassignment, or adverse actions. What if they persuasive the

commander to allow them to marry. Can this be allowed? I think so, but the regulations states otherwise. Do the individuals have choices in the matter based on the statements made in AR 600-20, the answer is no. The commander needs to enforce the army policy. In any case the chain of command needs to keep in mind the charge they took when they were commissioned and the Soldiers within their unit. The Soldiers pay particular attention to decision of this type of action to see whether or not their chain of command will make the hard right decision in this matter. The chain of command is also forced to make an ethical decision. Leaders should always strive to teach their subordinates make the right choices even when it would be easier to bend the rules/regulations or take a short cut. Like this situation, some leader may tell their Soldier to continue with the relationship because they do not agree with the new policy.

Whether the person is an officer, a senior noncommissioned officer or junior Soldier, commanders at every level should follow regulations and laws in every opportunity. This is the oath they took when they received their commission. My take on this matter is that before March of 2000, we had pretty good handle on relationships between officers and enlistees, just because a few people made bad decision prior to this policy, the entire system changed. Some senior noncommissioned officers and officers felt the need without addressing the rest of the Army about this matter. We should have had a say so about the change in the policy or at least done a survey throughout the force to see how many circumstances took place over the past 5 to 10 years. This would have given them a good ideal on whether or not the policy needed to be changed. As long as the relationship does not affect job performance or good order and discipline of a unit, then there is not issue with the fact that an officer and enlistee are intimate with each other. We live in a world that is made up of all types of relationships, that is what makes up so good at what we do. I hope this does not affect recruitment or take a drop in numbers because one of the individuals had to depart the military because of this policy. Our military and country needs everyone especially individuals who volunteer to protect this country to stay the course during this time as we fight the war on terrorism.

REFERENCES

1. Army Command Policy (2003). <http://www.army.mil>
2. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2002).