

UNITED STATES ARMY SERGEANT'S MAJOR ACADEMY

Ethics paper

Values and standards In the Dutch Army

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In the Dutch army, values and standards have been incorporated in all training programs.

Personnel in basic training and advanced training learn lessons that deal with military ethics.

The training involves all Soldiers from the most senior to the lowest enlisted and is taught in all training systems.

Soldiers were born and raised with their own set of family and school values, these play an important role. Your upbringing is vital in your basic views on ethics. Along with formal education the Army also educates Soldiers on values. Inevitably you are influenced by the manner of work in your group, company and battalion.

During your off duty time the habits between your comrades become normal, these values also become a part of your values system.

For example, the Army terms and training we use can sometimes take new recruit weeks to learn, making their parents sometimes unable to recognize them. This includes our use of force when necessary.

Soldiers who do sometimes do "wrong" in the public eyes sometimes can cause the entire Army to be corrupt. Our society demands a military that is morally and ethically correct.

The Royal Army has established "the code of conduct" and our daily events are reviewed constantly to ensure they meet their standard. These values can best be described by the following:

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1. Always do your best and what is right. Soldiers must learn from their errors and mistakes.
2. I will show my pride in the Royal Army through my attitude and behaviors.
3. As a member of a team my colleagues and I need and respect one another. Because of this I feel responsible for their well-being and will correct their actions if necessary.
4. I am responsible for the correct use of supplies and material entrusted in my care.
5. I am aware of my surroundings and will keep security in the forefront. I will avoid the use of drugs and drink in moderation.
6. I respect human rights and follow the rules of war. I treat all people with respect and equality and strive to help those less fortunate than I.
7. I execute my professional tasks, even under situations where my life may be at risk.
8. I will never abuse my power. If required I will use violence, but never more than necessary to accomplish my task. Everyone, especially my enemy must know that I am a tenacious and resolute Soldier.

These rules help Dutch Soldiers make correct choices during an ethical dilemma. Sometimes you must choose between friendships and doing what is right. Soldiers can sometimes let a friendship interfere with military operations, and go against the code of conduct. You must never let friendships sway you, hide facts or lie for your friends.

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A simple method is to ask your self the following three questions;

1. Is this legitimate?
2. Have we considered all interests involved?
3. Can I live with my decision?

If one of these three questions the answers is "no", you may have an ethical problem of which trouble will surely ensue. These questions we call the "the ethical decision-making-model".

I was involved in an ethical dilemma several years ago. I was forced to determine if this action was legal.

A good friend who was also my peer was in charge of an ongoing dive operation that was helping to repair an under water pipe line for a local gas station. I determined this to be illegal because of the circumstances involving my friend. The station needed an under water pipe line repaired. If the company hired a civilian company to fix the pipeline it would have cost thousands of Euros. My colleague had a boat and frequently used this gas filling station to fill his boat with gas. One Friday afternoon he repaired the pipeline and used two subordinates to help him.

However, he used military resources and abused his position as a senior NCO dive master to help the owner of the filling station. In addition, he gave his subordinates extra dive minutes which in turn resulted in extra pay (a diver is paid extra for every minute he works under the water).

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The following Monday one of the subordinates (A diver in basic training) told me the story and asked if I thought this was normal. That simple question caused me to think hard and possibly make a decision that would affect not only my friendship but possibly my colleague's career. This was a classic example of an ethical dilemma.

Listening to the story I determined it was differently wrong. But I heard only one side of the story. I did not research this on my own and I didn't go to my friend and colleague to ask his side of the story. I was thought that if he was questioned about this incident he would destroy the proofs (Pay lists). Finely I discussed this issue with my commander, he reported to his Commander and finely it was investigate trough the Military Police.

Eventually what happened leaked out and my colleague quickly destroys the proofs.

My friendship is over because of this, he felt I was disloyal to him. The investigation did not reveal enough evidence to charge him.

A mayor issue was his direct supervisor protected him.

And finely I get also from a high commander a reprimand that I can not express unproven charges.

I use the decision-making model whenever I am addressed with these types of situations. I also make sure to involve the "the code of conduct" of the Royal Army.

I was sure that I was doing the right ting and maybe a follow on investigation in the future with better accuracy find the truth.

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Because it became such a hostile environment between me, my colleague and his boss I decided to transfer to another installation and battalion.

Years later my colleague was charged with another offense and has since been suspended.

Currently he is "sick at home" and an investigation is still going on .

Last year new evidence surfaced against the boss of my colleague, he was forced to retire.

Finally there is a Dutch saying;

“Al is de leugen nog zo snel de waarheid achterhaald hem wel.”

If the lie still rapidly the truth has been gotten already him.