

Running Head: AN ETHICAL PROBLEM FACING THE ARMY TODAY

Ethics Thought Paper

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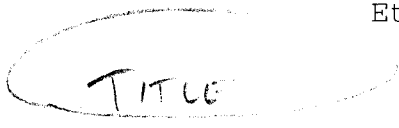
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Abstract

Financial payroll and unit operating budget waste is an ethical dilemma that cannot be allowed to linger in the United States Army. Senior leaders must be able to handle the demands of the cause-and-effect relationships of maximizing personnel and a unit's operating budget during today's Global War on Terrorism. Leaders must expand their frame of reference to control unnecessary expenditures.

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There is an old saying in the military that goes, "there is no such thing as a bad Soldier, just bad leadership". We have been entrusted with a great responsibility leading the son's and daughter's of America in defense of this nation. Character is usually developed during a person's socialization process. Where and how they are raised, experience, religion, education, and even economics have an impact on how a person's character is developed. When a Soldier joins the Army, they are taught Army values and the foundation of professional ethics essential to build teamwork, cohesion, and how a person is expected to behave. Throughout our military careers we have been able to witness several changes that have transformed the military. During our maturation process as Soldiers and senior leaders, discipline is the foundation of the enforcement of standards.

Payroll accounts for over forty percent of the military budget. The Global War on Terrorism has levied a giant burden on its personnel and operating budget. We have seen that misappropriation of funds can lead to the destruction of major corporations, only to see the senior directors hide all their assets in overseas off shore accounts, while the hard working majority have their savings and benefits pulled like a rug from under their feet. How often have you witnessed or heard of the

following scenarios? A brigade combat team is scheduled to replace another brigade combat team in a theater of operations within the next three to six months. Customarily, the replacing unit will conduct a pre-deployment site survey. The senior leadership of the incoming brigade combat team will travel to the theater of operations via commercial aircraft. Why are senior leaders deploying in and out of theater on commercial aircraft, when there are several military aircraft that are flying directly in and out of power projection platforms within the United States on a weekly, sometimes daily basis. This same collection of senior leaders from the brigade combat team will also receive the same benefits that deployed Soldiers will receive while they are in theater. Justifiably so, but why does it seem that each seven to ten day trip takes place at the end of one month and concludes during the beginning of the next? Now each member of the pre-deployment site survey team is afforded two months of tax exemption from their pay to the federal and state governments. An alternative would be to set a mandatory number of days within a month that a Soldier is deployed within a theater of operation to be eligible for tax exempt pay status. This would also eliminate the amount of times Soldiers would personally delay movement out of theater to

the beginning of the month and attempt to squeeze Uncle Sam for a few more dollars.

Another practice that leaders are using to take care of their Soldiers is to have them reenlist in a combat theater so that their reenlistment bonus is tax exempt. This is an incentive that is particularly appealing to Soldiers who want to reenlist, and tens of thousands have taken advantage of this program. However, some units have taken the opportunity to send Soldiers from a non-deployed unit over to a theater of operations just for the opportunity to reenlist tax free and return to their unit outside of the operational theater. Leaders think they are taking care of them, but the message they are sending to Soldiers is one of unethical tolerance. Senior leaders stress the importance of command supply and discipline within our ranks to conserve material and resources, what message are we sending to our Soldiers if we blatantly condone the practice of financial impropriety.

A family is getting ready to start a permanent change of station move to another base within the continental United States. The service member schedules his appointment with transportation for a Do-It-Yourself (DITY) move. The service member is afforded a percentage that it would cost a government

contractor to pack, ship, and haul their household goods. The Soldier and family use their sweat equity to pack, ship, and haul their own goods according to the amount of weight they are authorized to ship. They estimate how much weight they will move and they are given a percentage up front for operating costs, with the balance to be paid after the completion of the move. If a family falls short for their estimated weight they will receive less money, and if their weight increases so does their final payment check. Far too often, Soldiers will employ methods to increase their weight by placing cement bags, engine blocks, bricks, compact cars and even the neighbor's piano to ensure that they get the money they feel they deserve. Should the government bring back the shipping inspectors that would come by during the movement process and have you sign a survey about level of quality, competence, and courtesy.

Was it an ethical dilemma when leaders failed to prepare Soldiers from Task Force Smith for combat during the Korean War? Soldiers were more familiar with the beer halls and brothels of Japan, than they were with soldiering. Is it an ethical dilemma when a married senior leader has had an inappropriate relationship, but doesn't hesitate to punish, demote, or dismiss a subordinate from service for the same act? Is it an ethical

dilemma when a Soldier kidnaps, rapes, and then murders a family, only to have his supervisor try to cover it up? Is it an ethical dilemma when Soldiers abuse detainee's? These are just a few examples of ethical dilemmas that can infect a unit, and render it inefficient. Today, Leaders would not sit idly by and watch these earlier examples to continue to permeate within our ranks, so why does it continue to squander the money entrusted to us by the hard working people of America to protect and defend this country against all enemies.

In conclusion, Leadership by the definition involves several action verbs: influencing, providing, directing, motivating, operating and improving. The United States of America and the United States Army look to leaders to make sure that missions succeed, that people receive the proper training and care, so that values survive. The Army cannot tolerate unethical behavior. Leaders are the stewards of our nations most precious resources: freedom and people.