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### Ethics in the US Army

In today's modern battlefield the United States is facing an adversary unlike any we have faced before. The enemy is both evil and filled with hatred towards the United States and Western Culture. The actions of terrorist can not deter the strong and disciplined force of the Army. Soldiers continue to ensure their discipline is above reproach, and the discipline of the noncommissioned officers will continue to set the example for others to follow.

Webster's Universal College Dictionary defines ethics as "a system or set of moral principles (values); the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or governing a particular group, culture, etc". Leaders of character and competence set to achieve excellence by developing a force that can fight and win the nation's wars and serve the common defense of the United States (Department of the Army [DA], 1999, 2-1).

We are Soldiers in the best Army in the world. Soldiers of the United States Army are well trained, disciplined, physically fit, and loyal to the nation in which we serve. Soldiers rely on professional noncommissioned officers and officers to lead them in both peace and in war. It is often said the greatest generation of Soldiers was those who served during World War II. If this is true then the Soldiers of today are the next greatest generation. Soldiers who join the Army today are not drafted, they volunteer. These Soldiers don't train in case they get the call; they train for when they get the call.

Your character is the building block and contributes greatly to how you act. The Army recognizes this and has developed an acronym. The acronym is used to assist you in doing what is morally and ethically right and presenting good Army values. The acronym is LDRSHIP it stands for Loyalty, Duty Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage. Loyalty promotes unswerving allegiance to our constitution and the officers appointed over us. Duty is the rules and regulations we follow that guide us in are ethical decision making process. Respect is mutual it goes up and down, as leaders you must treat Soldiers with compassion and consideration and always treat Soldiers fairly in both rewards and punishment. Selfless Service is placing the mission above your own self. Honor is one of the most important Army Values, it ties all values together and without honor you can not identify with group values. Integrity encompasses all of your values and with out integrity you are considered without honor. Personal

Courage depicts virtue and allows Soldiers to meet fear head on. Whether it is jumping from an airplane at night with an 85 pound rucksack, 65 pounds of parachute and a full combat load, crossing LD an area heavily populated with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), or any other inherent dangerous act the US Army conducts.

In today's contemporary operating environment (COE) Soldiers find themselves facing an enemy who is adapt and blending in with his environment. This enemy does not wear a uniform and fight us on a linear battle field. He wears cloths just like any other ordinary citizen in the region. He will not want to be engaged by you in a fire fight. He will use Improvised Explosive Devices, Vehicle Explosive Devices (VBED), suicide bombers and snipers. He will kill innocent civilians, women and children alike. This enemy might not even carry a rifle it is much safer for him that way. This enemy does not fight fair; he does not belong to the Geneva Convention. If you are captured expect to be tortured, expect to be severely beaten, abused and you can expect to be beheaded in front of a camera to be used for propaganda. This enemy is ruthless some are battle hardened from fighting the Russians in Afghanistan, fighting with the Cheznians in Cheznia, training in terrorist camps in Cuba, Philippines, Afghanistan, Syria and Iran. This enemy is not fighting for his country he is fighting for ideological reasons. Most Middle Eastern terrorist have different goals and agendas. However they do agree on one thing they dislike Americans. Solders today face many ethical dilemmas. As Soldiers our country expects us to accomplish all missions to the best of our ability, regardless if we agree with the task at hand or not. In the writer's opinion the biggest ethical dilemma we face in today's operating environment is discipline. United States Soldiers need to be able to go from one situation to the next. Soldiers could find themselves in a firefight with insurgents one minute and then several minutes later be called upon to render aid to some Iraqi civilians who may have

been wounded by a stray bullet. The hardest part of combat is to watch your buddy die, and not being able to help him. You have a comradeship; a rapport that you'll never have again... There is no competitiveness, no money values. You must trust the man on your left and your right with your life (CPT Audie, Murphy). In today's modern battlefield there have been a lot of poor ethical situations not properly handled by our Soldiers. There have been rapes, Murders, theft and torture in Iraq. These actions severely disgrace every man and woman who ever wore the uniform. Most of these situations the person doing the crime was not alone, he or she had a battle buddy whose job it was to look out for them. When you are outside the Forward Operation Base (FOB) you are never alone in any situation. If you see another Soldier about to bring discredit on himself, the Unit and the Army you must stop him. If you can not stop him you must immediately report it to your leaders, do not place yourself in that ethical dilemma by not immediately reporting any situation. During my Military career, I have faced numerous ethical dilemmas since joining the Army, most Soldiers have and they might not even realize it. They probably started in basic training on the land navigation course. You and your buddies were not suppose to speak or give assistance, however when your buddy asks for help to find out where he or she is at do you do it? Most people do it what harm could come from it. You're at the Rifle range for record and you need to shoot 24 to qualify and your having a bad day. Your buddy is marking down the number of hits to turn it to your Drill Sergeant so you can graduate. You came up short you shot 22 does your buddy say you actually shot 24, yes nine times out of ten he will. These situations may sound trivial to the average John Q Public but to the United States Army they are not. As Soldiers are leaders and subordinates expect us to do the hard right over the easy wrong. Too often Soldiers will only do the right thing if some one is watching them. Not just Soldiers make poor decisions Non Commissioned Officers (NCO) and junior officers are not

above reproach. Some NCOs are afraid to properly conduct themselves accordingly when dealing with junior Soldiers. While conducting the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) some NCOs find themselves grading Soldiers and will give the Soldier extra push ups or sit ups to avoid having to fail them on the PT test. Even the following of Army Regulations I have seen NCOs falsify jump master currency for fellow NCOs for a friend of there's who did not want to jump, because maybe it was at night or cold. This blatant disregard for regulations could have got a young paratrooper hurt or even killed all because some NCO did not want to do his or her job. Some junior NCOs will notice actions by Soldiers that need to be corrected and they will fail to make that on the spot corrections. The NCO will merely say to himself I think that rule is stupid and therefore I don't agree with it so I am not going to make a big deal about that infraction. In my opinion regardless if you agree with the decisions of are higher headquarters if they put out a standard we must obey it and enforce it. Senior NCOs and Officers are not all together innocent in the dealing of ethical situations. Numerous senior officers and NCOs have found themselves in adulteress situations messing with someone else's wife or husband or just cheating on their own. These Leaders will do this and they will be the first ones to pas judgment on their subordinates. In the writer's opinion ethics is the most important thing to possess while serving in the United States Army. If you are unethical and your character is lacking you can not be an effective leader of America's Sons and Daughters. Leaders must do every thing in their power to stress the importance of ethics and Army values to their Solders. There is no excuse in not doing the right thing one hundred percent of the time. When Soldiers find themselves in an ethical dilemma they must act accordingly and like Spike Lee says "do the right thing" accomplishment of the unit. "To be an honorable person, you must be true to your oath and live

Army values in all you do.”<sup>1</sup> As warriors, we take an oath to support and defend our great nation. This oath is what drives the warrior ethos.

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References

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