

Running head: DO THE RIGHT THING

Do the right thing

MSG Ritchey V. Green

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Class 57

SGM Osvaldo Del Hoyo

06 December 2006

As the United States Army transforms into a more lethal and mobile force during the 21st Century, we as Senior Noncommissioned Officers will play a vital part in this transformation. We are the role models for future generations of Soldiers to come. These Soldiers will look to us to do what is ethically and morally right, day in and day out. Before I get into the meat and potatoes of my Ethics Paper, I want to first define the word ethics. Webster's states, "Ethics. 1. The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation 2. A set of moral principles: a theory or system of moral values (Webster) As Senior Noncommissioned officers we have a duty to mentor our subordinates in the ways of the Army. To teach them to make the right choices even when it would be easier to bend the rules or take a short cut.

The scandals of the 90's involving sexual misconduct within the military resulted in an awareness of ethical misconduct throughout the ranks and at every level of command. These violations of the basic principles of the Army's ethical policies must stop. In the Army complex situations do occur, but ethics mandate that we must live by sound professional values even when placed under pressure.

Incidents of sexual misconduct still occur even though conviction means possible loss of job, family, future, and self-respect. Ethical dilemmas occur when two or more deeply held values collide. It is imperative that Army leaders utilize Army policies to assist them in dealing with ethical dilemmas.

As leaders, we have three general ethical responsibilities: First, all leaders are role models. Setting the example in everything we do on and off duty and leading from the front. Second, avoid putting subordinates in compromising positions. Placing soldiers in situations of ethical dilemma, where the possibility exist he/she might make the wrong decision because of

misinterpreted instructions. Finally, we must develop good ethical traits in subordinates, constantly re-enforcing the fundamentals of duty, loyalty, selfless service, and integrity.

A case of misconduct involved Brigadier General Hale who took advantage of his rank and position by engaging in numerous sexual acts with the spouses of several his immediate subordinates. BG Hale was recalled to active duty, tried and found guilty on several counts including sexual harassment and adultery. He was subsequently sentenced to a reduction in grade for retirement pay, and fined. The gross incidents of ethical misconduct by BG Hale came on the heels of the one of the largest sexual harassment trials in the Army's history involving the Sergeant Major of the Army. Occurring almost simultaneously was the sex scandal largest investigation of misconduct ever in the history of the Army.

During the summer of 2003, I was performing my duty as a Casualty Assistance Officer. I was confronted with an ethical dilemma. I called the spouse and explained to her who I was and what time I would be out to her house to assist her. As I arrived at the house, she met at the front door and offered my condolences to her and her family. From the beginning I felt uncomfortable being in her residence. I could smell that someone in the house had been smoking marijuana; she noticed that it bothered me and offered an explanation. She stated that it helped calm her nerves; she even asked did I want to take a hit. I asked her could she not smoke it in my presence or prior to me coming to her residence. The next day we were to go to the morgue so she could view the body and make arrangements for the memorial service. When I knocked on the door she came with just a towel on, I immediately backed away from the door and informed her that I would wait outside until she was finish dressing. She made a comment "I know you have seen plenty of naked women".

During the entire extent of my duty, I felt confronted with many ethical dilemmas. I knew I

was there to perform a duty and I would perform that duty in a professional and respectful manner. I know soldiers are faced with these similar situations everyday and some will not fulfill there duties and venture down that road and compromise their ethics.

In conclusion everyone faces some type of ethical dilemma in life. Using the decision-making process in ethical situations can help identify the course of action that will result in the greatest moral good. Interpret the situation and all factors and forces that relate to the dilemma. Choose the course of action that bests serve the nation, and implement the best course of action that will lead you to the right path.

Reference

Webster, M. (n.d.). Retrieved December 6, 2006, from Merriam- Webster Web site:

<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/ethics>