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Ethics Paper

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To me ethics is identifying a problem, determining what is right or wrong and then making a decision based on our values. We all possess our own set of ethics, does that mean we are right every time we make a decision. To me in my mind there is usually no doubt that I have made the right ethical choice. The Army teaches us that when faced with an ethical decision to use the Army values as our guide. Fortunately, most of us had many of these values instilled in us by our parents, but our parents also had a tremendous influence over how we prioritized these values. This prioritizing is the single best or at times the single worst factor when trying to make the right ethical decision. I believe the first step a leader must take is to realize that all the Army values are of equal importance, only then can we make the best ethical decision.

When I was a 1SG preparing to deploy to Iraq another 1SG from the brigade came to me and told me he had a high speed supply clerk SPC who wanted to deploy with us. Her husband was a SGT deploying to the same location with HHC Brigade and they were currently on different rotation cycles and wanted to be together. My commander and I agreed to have her deploy with us to help the Soldiers out. We were not made aware of their marital problems after enquiring with senior leaders throughout the brigade. During the deployment it was evident that something wasn't right with their relationship she would always be with different male Soldiers and he would be very jealous and they often argued. The leadership couldn't assume anything but we were paying attention to the situation along with the others from the chain of command. The brigade commander put out a visitation policy that no other Soldier could be in another Soldier's room after 2400 unless it was on official business to try to deter inappropriate relationships.

One evening she was playing cards with one other female Soldier and four other male Soldiers in one of her platoon member's rooms. When they were done at approximately 2400 only the female

Soldier and the two Soldiers who lived in the room remained there to clean up the mess that was made during the night. One roommate went outside of the room to smoke and the female Soldier's husband who evidently was outside the room all night, pushed him down and ran into the room immediately and proceeded to punch the other male Soldier and fight him. The roommate and female Soldier immediately pulled them apart. The husband said that they were having sex and he walked in on them before they began. I was gone from the base camp at another location when this happened and both company commander were at a conference in another location. The following day rumors were flying around that my Soldiers were drinking having sex and not following the rules my Soldiers of course denied this and said that the husband was a jealous person who assaulted one of my Soldiers. When I returned two days later statements were written, assumptions were made and the rumors had already been flying. The brigade commander was already made aware of the situation and talking about punishment for the Soldiers involved. The brigade CSM was with me so there wasn't much leadership experience present to handle the situation when it occurred.

My commander and I had many questions to answer about the situation and how to respond to it. There was the inappropriate relationship piece, the drinking pieces, the visitation policy violation and assault of one of my Soldiers. There was no investigation done at the time so evidence of drinking could have been disposed of, as well as stories created by all parties involved to support each other. Rumors were already flying around that the Soldiers were sleeping together and drinking and all of the Soldiers involved were denying it. To make matters worse the brigade commander who was there the whole time was forming opinions and wanting my female Soldier returned to home station. The situation was not a good one, if we supported our Soldiers then it would look like we support drinking and adultery if we didn't support our Soldiers it would look like we didn't believe them. The commander and I choose to support our Soldiers and the other chain of command to support there's.

The biggest problem that we had was the brigade commander wanting our female Soldier to return to home station this gave the indication that he felt our Soldier was guilty and being punished for something that we and our Soldiers felt she didn't do. After punishment was given out to the personnel involved we had problems with our Soldiers because they were under the impression that we didn't support our Soldiers because the only one returned to home station was the female. Evidently when I told the brigade commander how I felt about the way he handled the situation with my Soldiers and the predicament that he put my commander and I in with our Soldiers I wasn't tactful enough and it warranted a letter of reprimand. I felt that I had to support my Soldiers and they were not being treated fairly. I believe that by my reactions it helped me and my commander with our Soldiers and they felt that they could trust us and knew that we would stand up for them when we felt they were not being treated fairly.

Thankfully many ethical problems are clear cut and easily defined using the Army values as a guide that assist us easily in reaching the right decision. There will be times however when personal feelings about an individual may interfere with our decision making abilities. It is imperative that to look past our own personal feelings and do what's right for the Army and our unit. The Army values are our foundation and our key to defining ethical problems. Most of us will make different recommendations and decisions based on our personal values and experience when solving ethical problems. The important point to remember is that we are able to recognize there is a problem and act to correct it. The decisions we implement and how impartial these decisions are will directly reflect on our unit and how our Soldiers react to similar situations. Our decision to act on an ethical problem directly reflects our desire to maintain and enforce the Army standards. Most importantly, we instill in our Soldiers the need to maintain these standards even when it means doing the hard right over the easy wrong.