

Running Head: ETHICS IN THE MILITARY IS JUST AS IMPORTANT TODAY

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Abstract

Ethics in the military is just as important today as it was in previous history! ^{It is} still taught to all service members in conjunction with military justice. Ironically, ethical values have not changed but the values of military leaders in their quest for superiority and self-preservation has changed the face and tangibility of ethics. In order to preserve the dignity of the military we must carry on as our forefathers, knowing, feeling and believing that this is "my country" and I'm willing to uphold and preserve that which my forefathers before me holds true in values. Samuel Johnson tells us that "integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful."

no reference - where did this come from?

Ethics in the Military

The standards of being a Soldier no longer depict the same meaning as it did during previous war times. During the Civil War, Korean War and World War I if a citizen told you that he was enlisting in the military to fight for his fellow citizens and for freedom, one had no doubt that he or she would do just that.

Standards and values in today's military mean different things to different people. For some a free education, for others it's just to see the world, then for the population who really care about freedom it's for the morale good of the country.

Based on the different objectives and perceptions each person has ~~shape~~ ^{are shaped} their values and their ethical behavior towards the military in war and peacetime.

One might hear a neighbor say that maybe the Soldier didn't know any better, otherwise the Soldier may not have shoplifted that item. This Soldier may not have been driving under the influence if he had known the consequences or another might say the Soldier may have forgotten he or she was in the military when they went on leave and robbed that store.

Shaping Ethical Standards $\xrightarrow{\text{center}}$

Regardless of the act or reason, our ethical standards shape our behavior and make us responsible as Soldiers. Ethical standards are components, which make up our courage and dignity.

Each Soldier, whether they are an enlisted or officer, receive^s training each year on Ethics. Each ^{Soldier} receives training on the Geneva Convention and what it means. Training is also provided on military justice and states explicitly which articles are punitive.

^{since} ↓ All Soldiers receive this type of training and are in a better position than most, then how is it that some Soldiers fall short of meeting the standards of ethical behavior?

Samuel Johnson once said "integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful." where is this quote coming from - no reference

Are all Soldiers bad or display unethical behavior? The answer is no, yet negative conduct is promoted and is far reaching than positive efforts.

Leaders Whom We Disliked Shaped Our Beliefs → center

Most, if not all of us remember a leader during the infancy of our military career whether it was the drill sergeant, squad leader or first sergeant whom we thought had standards of steel and was unyielding in our grooming in the military. Our first thoughts of these individuals may have been that they were mean or just crazy! They never let up and mandated that you did the right thing at all times. If we didn't we were severely reprimanded. At the time ~~because~~ we were new to the military and did not understand that these were the strong arms of the military and were shaping our ethical beliefs and standards. ^{They were the one} Leaders who ~~were~~ ^{are} what we aspire to be today. Those ^{leaders} who not only knew the ethical standards and values but instill them, even if the junior Soldier had no interest at the time.

Giving Back and Understanding Ethical Values → center

We as leaders can set standards for our subordinates and peers by first learning what the ethical values are, then teach, instill and enforce use of the values. The eight ethical values are Honesty, Integrity, Loyalty, Accountability, Fairness, Caring, Respect and Promisekeeping.

Let's explore what these values are. Honesty attributes are truthfulness, straightforwardness and candor. Each ^{word} when used improperly can bear the face of honesty and lead to deception. Integrity means to act with honor, exercise independent judgment and at all costs avoid conflicts, which might otherwise show conflict of interest and deception. Loyalty requires a certain balance of trust, faith, and allegiance. ^{Loyalty is} When not used in the appropriate manner, it can thwart one's ethical

*where are you getting this information from?
No references.*

conduct and behavior. Accountability is showing and accepting^{the} consequences for one's judgment and promotes sound decision-making. Fairness is the ability to be open-minded and still remain impartial in any given situation. Fairness means unbiased and equal treatment of all Soldiers. Caring and being compassionate towards each other go hand in hand. Sometimes we as Leaders forget this precious trait until we are the recipients. Respect is to treat others with dignity and grace, promote self-determination and will regardless of race, position and rank. Finally, Promise keeping is a term not heard often but its' actions are seen and heard daily. Soldiers expect leaders to hold true to what they say, teach and live.

We, as leaders, must understand that when it comes to ethics there are standards, which we must live and breathe. We must impart the values to each of our Soldiers and not walk away and think the values^{are} taught to their^{own} subordinates. We, as the teachers and leaders, must keep a watchful eye on the future prize of our nation's['] leader, those whom we teach and lead. Whereas Soldiers may hold all of the values of ethics, they may display strengths in one more than the others may. When we as leaders truly understand the values of ethics ourselves, we don't have to turn the other cheek to wrongdoing and corruption. We can stand bold and contrite and inform others the right and wrong way of doing things.

these words are opposites

Ethical Values, Here Today, Tomorrow and Forever →

Ethical values will always be a part of the military. It is up to us as leaders to uphold these values and continue to communicate them to junior Soldiers so they know will hold the same convictions and loyalty our forefathers held during previous wars.

How do we as leaders renew this legacy in our Soldiers today? First, we must examine why we lost the passion and forthright to uphold our ethical value. One might state that after Vietnam our ethics were put to bed. We were no longer at war! Most of our Soldiers were home. There wasn't a need to display and exhibit ethical standards to the degree that we were being watched by the world! One thing is certain that a true leader is always a **Leader!** Those who came home from Vietnam continued to Soldier and instill the ethical values and standards of the military. A few junior Soldiers listened and because they listened they were subconsciously given the reins of conduct, ethics and standards, which some leaders bear today. Perhaps this is why the entire military has not gone completely astray! The tough love, strict discipline, and the need to do what's right made us what we are today.

Moving Forward – What Can We Do As Leaders → *Center*

It is true in today's military that some of us get promoted too soon. We know our jobs through and through but do not possess the full wardrobe of leadership dressed with knowledge of our jobs, knowledge of ethical standards and values and more important the ability to right wrongs that we see on a daily basis. This in itself has contributed greatly to a considerate demise in ethical standards.

The ethical standards for the military have not changed. We change as leaders when we don't practice the ethical values set forth for us and impart them to our subordinates. Standards will always be a part of who we are as leaders. Our Soldiers look to us for standards and even if they have none of their own, they expect us as leaders to set the examples. Strength, definition and conciseness add merit to ethical standards and values. Soldiers don't always know what they need. It is up to us as strong **Leaders** and **Sergeants Major** to teach them.

Conclusion

Ethical values and standards in today's military are as prevalent as they were in years ^{past} passed. It is our leaders who enforce the significance of these values into the hearts and minds of our leaders of tomorrow. Just as our leaders before us held true to the belief that ethical beliefs and values were the cornerstone of their being, we too must undertake this same mindset. We must instill right and wrong in the minds of our subordinates even if they chose not to listen. We must correct wrong when we see it and even go as far as explaining why such an act was wrong and the consequences of such wrongdoing. Ethical values and beliefs are not standards, which should be displayed just during wartime, but ^{they should be lived daily} a way of daily living, which in some ways sets the window dressing for war. In short, what this means is if we learn and practice ethical standards and values in peacetime, our Soldiers will have no doubt what we stand for during war.