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FOCUS

The present edition of the journal is in large measure a response to a short manuscript received by our staff which, we felt, merited investigation. This article, "Ethics and the Noncommissioned Officer," is reprinted below. It offers many more challenges than might be addressed in one issue, yet the following topics are those that provoked both the feature article and the feature follow-on: the moral responsibility of the NCO to the professional military ethic, the position of the NCO relative to the military profession, and the possible requirement for further ethical codes for the NCO. Pursuing these topics, one may recall Maury Feld's "The Military Self-Image," in which he describes the value of the military journal:

[The military journal] is at the frontier of the military establishment, serving to indicate the areas where innovation is or should be in process rather than how it is being accomplished. For better or for worse, the journal serves the military imagination rather than the military routine. . . . [These articles] are expected to open up new and unexplored areas for military speculation and reflection. (p. 187)

DEJÀ VU

The staff sadly announces the departure of MAJ Jeffries as editor. CPT Higgs, who has assisted MAJ Jeffries in earlier editions, will take the editorship but for this one issue before passing the post to CPT James Narel. We are grateful to those of our readers who have responded to our call for suggestions and assistance.

Any reader desiring to use any article of our journal, in full or in part, without formally recognizing authorship should contact the editor for permission.

FUTURE EVENTS

Professor Michael Walzer, author of *Just and Unjust Wars*, will present a lecture on "War and Morality," at 0930 hours, 10 May 1979, in the Department of English Conference Room. Interested persons are invited.

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THE CATALYST

"Ethics and the Noncommissioned Officer"
by
Sergeant First-Class Cleveland W. Feemster

Several weeks ago I attended a briefing on the ethics education program conducted at the United States Military Academy. The briefing was informative, but I was bothered by the fact that all the discussion centered around the need of the Officer Corps to be ethical and morally responsible. There was no mention of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps.

I tried to understand that this was West Point, basic training for officers; therefore, the emphasis should be on the Officer Corps. This rationalization soon ran out of power. So I raised the question: why is there not as much concern for the Noncommissioned Officer Corps on this subject? Aren't we supposed to be morally responsible? Do we need to be? Wouldn't a higher standard return some of the "lost" prestige to the NCO Corps? I received no satisfactory answer to any of these questions during this briefing. After the briefing, one of the principals suggested that I do some research on my own and publish my findings.

There is not an abundance of information to be found on this subject. In fact, I found nothing on this subject directed at the Noncommissioned Officer Corps, not even in *The Noncommissioned Officer's Guide* (21st Edition, The Stackpole Co.). In searching to determine why there is so little concern about the NCO and his ethical behavior, I decided to begin by comparing the Oaths of Office and Enlistment. Discounting the historical wording of each, I have broken them down into three main areas of concern: a) the taking of the obligation, b) the conditions of obligation, and c) the enforcement of the obligation. . . .^{*} The Army should and can expect no less moral and ethical behavior from its NCO Corps than from its Officer Corps.

These points, I hope, will raise some of the issues of ethics in the ranks. It is automatically assumed that the officer is ethical and honorable, but what about the Noncommissioned Officer? Is he also expected to be ethical and honorable? Does he need to be? Should he be subject to the same exacting standards as the officer? My answer is yes to all of the above.

^{*}At this point SFC Feemster analyzes both oaths, quoting them at length in tables at the conclusion of his study. Since CPT Narel develops these same points in greater detail, I will defer the presentation of this material until that time. --editor.

From this brief analysis of the oath of enlistment and the oath of office, I cannot find that much difference in the obligation accepted by each. In fact, if both were put into plain language, they would be approximately the same. Another alternative might be a separate oath of enlistment/office for the senior NCO grades, one separate from that of the enlisted soldier, requiring considerably more dedication to principles.

What about the NCO Corps? Has it been forgotten on the issue of ethics and honor? All the articles I have seen over the past twenty-four months have been addressed to the need of officers to be morally and ethically responsible. There has been little mention of the NCO. It seems rather implausible to exclude 30% of the force on an issue as important as ethical behavior. What better place to start than with the Noncommissioned Officer? It is with him that day-to-day contact with both junior enlisted and officer personnel occurs. He provides the perfect link for sound ethical and honorable behavior throughout the ranks.

All service schools were asked in 1975 to check their curriculum for ethics instruction.¹ I am sure that all officer courses were upgraded, but I am not so sure of those courses for and about the NCO. I do know that ethics is taught, and taken seriously, at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.²

Are NCO's expected to be honorable and ethically responsible? I say yes. Many senior NCO's occupy positions of great authority and responsibility. Some NCO's are now in positions of command.** These men should be expected to be no less honorable and ethical than their officer counterparts in command positions. This Noncommissioned Officer is just as responsible for the soldiers in his command as an officer and faces the very same dilemmas.

Does the NCO need this honor and integrity? I am proud of the fact that most of the officers and NCO's with whom I work will not question my word. Not all NCO's are as fortunate as I in this regard. The reasons for the failure of such relationships between officers and NCO's are to be found as often on one side of the relationship as on the other. The result, however, has been the unfortunate conclusion that the word of an NCO could not be accepted in all cases.

*SFC Feenster has been instrumental in distributing the USASMA lesson plan to interested NCO and Officer personnel. --editor.

**In the U.S. Army this involves command positions at several Army schools. More such assignment shifts have taken place in the U.S. Air Force. For information see bibliography for articles from *Air University Review*. --editor.

Over the course of the years, some NCO's have been put on the spot by their commanders for candid answers. As a result, some NCO's have tended to offer the desired answer.² Another example is the well-meaning NCO who attempts to "take care" of his commander: the mess sergeant or supply sergeant who comes through with the needed items when all seems lost, doing what he thought the commander wanted done at that moment and seeing the commander turn his head even though proper channels and procedures are circumvented.³ In this case the commander has implicitly approved the act. There has been little concern for the ethical behavior of the NCO. The need for attention is there. But self-interest on the part of both parties, if allowed to continue unabated, contributes to the erosion of proper ethical and moral conduct.

The standards applied to the moral and ethical conduct of the NCO should be the same as those applied to that of the officer. As leaders, we should all measure up to the same exacting standards. If the platoon leader is absent, the platoon sergeant assumes command. The soldiers and officers must be able to accept the word of the platoon sergeant as readily and completely as they would the officer, and rightfully so. The NCO is now in direct control of the well-being of the men. This mutual trust is the only way that today's Army will be able to function at its peak efficiency. As long as this lack of trust exists the Army is being hurt. To accept less than the highest standard would be to continue the present "do-nothing" attitude.

Why not extend this logic through the entire enlisted force. After we of the senior NCO ranks begin to live by this system, our high standards of ethical behavior will filter down. Leadership is not just talking a good "game plan"; it is reinforced by example. As the soldier sees these traits in his leaders, he will emulate them.⁴

An additional benefit of this new attitude would be an enhancement of the image of the NCO Corps. Over the past few years the Corps has endured some terrible wounds, some self-inflicted and some not. By requiring a full accounting for our actions and holding ourselves responsible for that trust, the pride of belonging to the NCO Corps would return to those members of the NCO Corps who have lost it. It would also serve as a warning to those aspiring to enter our ranks that we will accept only those who are ready and willing to meet our exacting standards of ethics and morality.

What action is required to improve the situation? First, a re-evaluation by those members of the NCO and the Officer Corps who do not share this complete moral and ethical trust. This would be no easy task, but one that would benefit the entire Army. All this would require is to make the Officer and NCO Corps aware of the need for such trust.

Second, the development of a sense of responsibility that goes along with this renewed trust. An acceptance of the consequences for action and decision is needed on the part of both officers and NCO's.

Third, the levying of punishments for violation of this trust. It would be suggested by some that there should be a single penalty, possibly release, for non-compliance. I must disagree with this single penalty theory. The punishment should be commensurate with the violation of trust, to be determined by the commander or board of peers and announced in official orders. Punishment could include everything from being relieved of position, to the worst, being reduced in grade or even released from active duty.

As you read this, you may have said, "That's not new." You're right. But have we of the NCO and Officer Corps been doing this all along? Take a look around.

NOTES

¹ Chaplain (CPT) Donald R. Turkelson, USA, "The Officer as a Model of Ethical Conduct," *Military Review*, 58, No. 7 (July 1978), 59.

² Turkelson, 59.

³ Chaplain (Colonel) Kermit Johnson, USA, "Ethical Issues of Military Leadership," *Parameters*, 4, No. 2 (1974), 35.

⁴ Turkelson, 59.

FEATURE ARTICLE

"Military Professionalism and the Emergence of the NCO"

by

Captain Calvin T. Higgs, Jr.

In surveying the literature on military professionalism, one observes a slow, but nonetheless progressive, trend toward more modern formulations of Huntington's traditional equation of corporateness, responsibility, and expertise (*The Soldier and Society*). This traditional approach sees its strongest modern champion in Morris Janowitz, whose conceptualization of military professionalism has changed little since it was first formulated twenty years ago. The following excerpt from *The Professional Soldier* outlines his criteria:

But a profession is more than a group with special skill, acquired through intensive training. A professional group develops a sense of group identity and a system of internal administration. Self-administration--often supported by state intervention--implies the growth of a body of ethics and standards of performance. (p. 6)

The influence of Huntington is unmistakable. Even in his "Military Organization," where it seems he is expanding the criteria of professionalism, little progress is made. The requirements still remain "(a) a system of training; (b) a body of expert knowledge and skill practices (sic); (c) group cohesion and solidarity; (d) a body of ethics and a sense of responsibility; and (e) mechanisms of self regulation" (p. 2).

Few are willing to break away from the three basic criteria. Even such modern studies as Stephen Sloane's "Professionalism--A Broader Perspective" and the Manpower Commission's *Defense Manpower* (1976), while pointing out the need of a more contemporary model of professionalism, accept the traditional definition almost verbatim (Sloane, p. 45; *Manpower*, p. 68). A first halting movement toward an expansion of the criteria was taken by Jacques Van Doorn, who suggests in his *The Soldier and Social Change* the addition of two further criteria: the formal commission and a "strong social isolation in a professional community" (p. 31). Everett Hughes in "Professions" had similarly modified the Huntington model by the addition of a fourth attribute: "a system of rewards (monetary and honorary) that is primarily a set of symbols of work achievement and thus ends in themselves" (p. 672). This last, however, seems to work against the necessary allegiance of the professional to the society. Most theorists, in fact, mark the movement of the occupation into the field of profession by observing the point at which behavior ceases to be self-interested and becomes other-oriented, the specific other necessarily being the larger society. To suggest rank or award as a separate criterion is to damage the model unnecessarily. Rank does indeed have utilitarian function but is best seen as a measure of the success of the individual professional with a view toward the institution as a whole.

In isolation such definitions mask the fact that the Officer Corps has moved into the ranks of the professionals only relatively recently. Many analysts point this out, indicating different reasons for such a move. Kurt Lang, for example, suggests that the movement was "brought about by the twin forces of industrial development and modern nationalism," with "traditional and modern elements normally fused within the professional military ethos" (*Military Institutions and the Sociology of War*, pp. 30-31). These remarks from Lang's study describe the two major directions taken by the theorists: first, the approach that investigates the technological and societal aspects involved in the professionalization of the officer corps; second, the approach that investigates the conflict between traditionalism and modernism

within the military. Janowitz tends to favor the first of these two approaches, describing in *Sociology and the Military Establishment* the gradual appearance of field specialists and staff officers to assist the combat commander (p. 46) and in *The Professional Soldier* the emergence through prolonged training of skilled specialists in specialized services (p. 6). Progress, he observes, has been slow.

Others favor the second approach because it provides them an opportunity to examine a perceived reluctance on the part of the Armed Services to adapt to change. This particular formulation almost always shows a static organization which confers ascriptive professional status upon its members. Maury Feld, one of the leading theorists of ascriptive professionalism, in his "Professionalism, Nationalism, and the Alienation of the Military" remarks: "It is the official act of selection and designation itself which confers the label of professionalism on the individual soldier. . . . Officer status is a result of organizational fiat, and may be withdrawn as arbitrarily as it is conferred" (p. 56). Many critics of the military begin their arguments by assuming the negative organizational model that this approach might suggest. Such a model, however, is unsatisfactory because it destroys any notion of individual autonomy and robs the institution of its dynamic character.

Such a pejorative view of the individual professional is hardly acceptable, though numerous examples may be found of such a stance. A similar negativism is betrayed by Huntington in *The Soldier and the State*: "Any given officer corps will adhere to the ethic only to the extent that it is professional, that is, to the extent that it is shaped by functional rather than societal imperatives" (p. 174). This suggests an autonomy lost to the system, a system which at this point becomes a machine. A true institution of society will not admit of such a separation of functional and societal imperatives. Were functional and societal aspects of the profession to separate to such an extent, the defining characteristics of the individual professional would lose their reformatory qualities, and professional ethics would devolve to systems of formalized rules and regulations. Progress within such a profession would be measured against these rules, and a strict formal ideology would be fostered, much as Bengt Abrahamsson in "Military Professionalization and Estimates on the Probability of War" believes to be the case: first, by selection to the profession of individuals "having attitudes congenial to the military establishment"; second, by promoting those "conforming to the internal values of the profession"; third, by indoctrination during training (p. 35). Although such a program is effective, the success is systemic rather than thematic; in other words, such a program inclines toward success regardless of the values fostered. The challenge is still the selection of the right values for the profession.

A system where institutional values have been thus formalized is described by Mieczyslaw Michalik in "Normative Linkages Between Civilian and Military Sectors of Polish Society," an analysis of professionalism in the Polish military. In their Armed Forces two books, *Principles of the Ethics of Customs of Career Soldiers in the Polish People's Army* and *Military Ceremonial*, outline specifically the accepted norms and principles: the first contains the fundamental rules of conduct "growing out of the leading ideological and cultural tenets of education in a socialist society"; the second deals primarily with regulations (pp. 160-161). While our forces maintain many customs and traditions which bind the professional informally, the Polish military system has formalized these aspects of professionalism into formal principles, removing the very element which contributes to the vitality of the American system.

Yet the theorists are not blind to the changing nature of the military. In the American Army, the change often mentioned is that from a mobilization force to one of deterrence (Janowitz, *Sociology*, p. 9; Russett, p. 12). This development, coupled with the trend toward increased technology, has meant an increased "internalization of the military," as Van Doorn suggests in "Armed Forces and Society: Patterns and Trends" (p. 47), and has been an additional catalyst to developing military professionalism. With the officers increasingly viewed as professionals operating "under bureaucratic authority" (Janowitz, *Sociology*, p. 43), many have come to realize that "the context and consequences of professionalism have radically changed from the classic view" (Russett, p. 12).

One of the more promising modern formulations was offered by Zeb Bradford and Frederic Brown in *The United States Army in Transition*. Although I am not in total agreement with their conclusions, I find their observations concerning the Huntington model valuable in that they urge modern analysts to free themselves from a model of military sociology which, though useful in the past, today is neither an accurate representation of modern professionalism nor a functional basis for further study. In their words, the Huntington model "can inhibit appropriate development of new attitudes necessary for the Army to diversify and accommodate change" (p. 218). They question the analysts who would force the military as a profession into a framework established by other professions, rather than analyzing the characteristics within the military institution itself. To the Huntington model they therefore raise two basic objections: first, that "management of violence" no longer suffices to describe the Army's role, especially in terms of its commitments to global security; second, that attempts to define the military profession in terms of a single functional expertise, as they suggest Huntington does, are fruitless (p. 220).

Thus they choose to adapt the Huntington model by suggesting the priority and the progressively changing nature of expertise in terms of institutional goals: "The military profession can be properly defined only in terms of both its purpose and the conditions placed upon the fulfillment of that purpose" (pp. 221-222). In addition to this teleological orientation, they recognize at the same time a normative aspect in professionalism, an aspect which displays both objective and subjective content: "It is objective in that professional status is granted by the state if certain performance criteria are met by the officer. It is subjective in that the officer must feel a sense of duty to serve" (p. 223). The subjective component, recognized as subjective, is an important addition here; however, the fact that it is only implicitly contained, if at all, in the above definition of military professionalism might suggest an unfortunate subordination of this component to performance criteria. Likewise, seeing professional status as strictly externally imposed is problematic, as I will point out shortly. These two principal difficulties, I feel, would soon make their dual model, in which combat and support armies are to be seen as autonomous in all aspects, including that of ethical values, appear disastrous to the moral environment within the military community and disruptive to the very performance criteria that they deem so essential.

If there is anything which is to distinguish the military professional from his civilian counterpart, it must be his normative, deontological dedication to ethical values. Standards, not goals, therefore must form the basis for any modern definition of modern military professionalism. Sam Sarkesian in "Military Ethics and Professionalism" seems to concur: "ethical behavior by military professionals as perceived by society is a basic ingredient to the legitimacy and credibility of the military institution" (p. 495). This is much more than the negative "objective control" of the Huntington model, where, as James Dickey points out in "A Personal Statement," "civilian control is best assured by allowing the army to develop its own values and ethos based on discipline" (p. 17), and more too than the subjective constraint Dickey himself suggests in the "civilian attitudes" observable throughout the Army (p. 30). What Sarkesian has suggested is that military ethics are integrally bound up with the legitimacy of the military as an institution of society and, furthermore, are fundamental to military cohesiveness and professional status (pp. 495-496).

This dual orientation of military ethics, outward toward society with regard to the legitimacy of the institution and inward toward the members of the institution with regard to professionalism, parallels the internal and external aspects of legitimacy suggested by D. Schössler in "The Functional Significance of the Military Socialization Process for the Internal Stability of the Military Organization" (p. 141). Clearly legitimacy may be examined in both aspects; however, one must realize that what is being legitimized in each case is different. Externally the

military is legitimized as an institution of society by "how closely military ethics converge with the ethical values of the larger society" (Sarkesian, p. 507). By using this criterion, which Sarkesian sees as the premise upon which military professionalism is grounded, I hope to suggest that legitimacy in its external aspect is logically prior to any internal considerations of professionalism. Many analysts would, however, suggest other criteria. Van Doorn in "The Military and the Crisis of Legitimacy," for example, proposes two criteria of legitimacy: first, that the function of the military coincide sufficiently with legitimate goals, as defined by the political community; second, that the military sub-culture be sufficiently representative of the political community in terms of its composition (pp. 25-26). Both of these criteria, however, seem less basic than convergence of values. Were values in fact convergent, the first would seem to suggest an improbable divergency, and the second would merely set up a tension which convergent values would assist in alleviating.

A new model of military professionalism seems to be suggested by these trends in military theory as well as by the present status of the military, as it moves beyond the "post-Vietnam" years and into the nineteen-eighties. In this new formulation the military survives as an institution legitimized by the society which it serves, convergence of values being the necessary criterion for such legitimacy. Within the institution itself, professionalism is determined by how successfully these legitimizing values can be incorporated into the organizational structure. Thus such criteria as expertise, corporateness, and systems of reward are measured within an ethical framework along what I shall describe as organization and value-developmental axes of the professional model. Such secondary criteria will in fact be integral to the system and function as indicators of the manner in which the professional ethic operates within the system. This conceptual model will be developed within my discussion of the Noncommissioned Officer. This model of military professionalism, grounded as it is in the professional ethic, not only allows but requires the inclusion of the NCO as a professional.

There will be those who will object to the second half of my title, pointing out the logical fallacy of suggesting the emergence of something which has such a long and proud tradition. The title is nonetheless appropriate, however, for it suggests a development in the modern concept of the NCO in his emergence into the ranks of the military professional. This parallels the similar earlier movement of the officer from a position of ascriptive authority to one of professional status. The NCO's position in regard to the military ethic must be evaluated in terms of such a development, for in emerging as a force in the modern military the NCO Corps has taken upon itself many of the responsibilities formerly the province of the professionals, the Officer cadre. This development too implies the acquisition of a particular and distinctive ethical system. The issues

that, therefore, must be examined are these: whether the NCO may be considered a professional and therefore be subject to a professional ethic, whether the current military ethic is equipped to accept the NCO, and whether the several implications implicit in the acceptance or non-acceptance of the NCO into the professional ethic, long the sacred precinct of the officer elite, are acceptable.

Ironically I have been forced to spend most of my energies showing why the NCO should be included in a discussion of military ethics, rather than in discussing what his role should be. Looking for specific ethical "roles," however, is equally as dangerous as excluding the careerist from professional status, for once ethics becomes role oriented there is a growing danger that the individual will see ethics, particularly his responsibility to professional ethics, as formally confined within the limits of the role itself. It is but a short step from this point to the point at which this ethical "role" is strictly associated with job description and objectives, and eventually regulation and moral responsibility become identical. Certainly it is much less morally challenging to accept this association, but there is a price. Once morality has been narrowed so that it does not at once extend beyond the boundaries of specific regulations and performance objectives, any positive change or self-correction is extremely handicapped if not made impossible. Unless professional ethics extends beyond these bounds, its potential for internal adaptability and change is lost, and the system proceeds somewhat blindly until it falls under the external and detached scrutiny of the society to which it is servant. I dare say that this is what has happened at several points in the past, and although these outside controls or criticisms were necessary, they were at the same time necessarily disruptive to the system which had denied itself that area of growth.

A healthy professional ethic, therefore, would encompass a wider range of activities and associations and allow a potential for growth and change, as well as a margin for self-analysis. This model will have no hope of success unless all members who are dedicated to the profession are included within its boundaries. Indeed, a professional ethic which allowed merely the officer elite to claim sanctuary and at the same time required the NCO to operate outside its bounds, "to get the job done, no questions asked," would be no ethic at all, for such an orientation merely addresses itself to the short-term problem, avoiding the long-range view required of the military professional.

Exclusion of the NCO from the military ethic could have three possible outcomes. First, the NCO might accept his role, enjoying a position outside the ethical strictures of the profession, for indeed responsibility then loses its moral attribute, and the individual no longer need worry about the rightness or wrongness of his behavior, merely whether the behavior will be approved or accepted, officially or informally, by his superiors. Of

course, one of the unfortunate side effects here is that all behavior is therefore judged by its impact upon the superiors. Any activity which would have no impact or which would not contribute to some observable goal would be valueless and probably not undertaken. In such a system, punishment for the violation of regulations bearing a true or a perceived moral significance would not be seen to be punishments for specific acts, rather for being caught doing the acts. This is a significant shift: from "you ought not to do (x)" to "you ought not to [be caught doing (x)]." Rather than having to be aware of a number of x-behaviors of differing moral weight for which he may be held accountable, the individual now has to be aware of but one, which itself includes a number of equally weighted x-behaviors.

A second possibility is for the group being excluded to adopt an ethical position of its own, either assuming membership in the professional ethic from which it had been excluded or establishing an autonomous and self-regulative model of its own. Either of these alternatives has its complications, and I think both movements are observable within the NCO Corps today. The first, for which I am presently arguing, is the more challenging, because it allows for the possibility of an NCO, having accepted the professional ethic, not allowing himself specific ways of carrying out his commander's orders, ways which the commander, viewing the NCO as a service member outside the confines of professional ethics, might have come to expect. Where such expectations exist, the failure of the NCO to "measure up" will, in some form, be reflected in the commander's appraisal of his performance. Assuming membership in the professional ethic, where such membership is not extended, requires a true and sincere dedication to the values of the institution.

In the face of such strong prejudice, it is not surprising to find equally strong statements of allegiance required within the NCO Corps of its members. The "Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer" begins: "No individual is more professional than I[.] I am a noncommissioned officer, a leader of soldiers. As a noncommissioned officer I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as 'The Backbone of the Army.'" If nothing else, the creed represents the growing awareness on the part of NCO's of themselves as professionals. But is their professionalism to be viewed in respect to the already existing military ethic or to an emerging autonomous ethic? The position of the emerging NCO professional consciousness is still very much in transition. It does display a desire to be assimilated into the military ethic. Over and over again in the NCO creed and in NCO leadership documents the allegiance of the NCO to the military ethic is reiterated; however, as many senior NCO's are becoming aware, allegiance to a moral system from which the professional is excluded is unacceptable.

The more authentic allegiance is that of an individual to an ethic of which he is an integral part and in which he, as a viable member, has a voice--as a professional. If the NCO cannot be included within the military

ethic, the only alternative, other than returning to the status of role-actors, will be the formulation of a separate professional ethic. Such a formulation, if it is not already begun in embryo, would not be difficult to imagine: the emergence of specific codes, the strengthening of professional associations such as NCOA, and the sharpening of self-regulating sanctions within the NCO Corps. The disadvantage, however, of allowing this growth to occur outside the professional ethic claimed by the Officer Corps is that such a parallel development would lead to a growing gulf between what would eventually be seen as "sides." Additionally, such a dual development allows the possibility of a moral dilemma for the NCO faced with conflicting duties to the two ethical systems: the one to which he belongs and the one to which he owes allegiance because of his position. Such dilemmas could have disastrous consequences for the Army as a whole. Dilemmas would be felt on the opposite side as well, by the commander who may recognize the validity of the NCO professional ethic but be, nonetheless, restrained to evaluate the NCO based upon the military ethic to which he himself belongs.

Failure to integrate the NCO Corps into the professional ethic is undoubtedly one of the underlying causes for the demands for unionization of the military. Although this issue lies beyond the scope of this paper, it is conceivable that the reluctance of the military to relinquish its singular perspective of "management of violence," a perspective which handicaps the recognition of NCO's as professionals within the existing military ethical system, contributed strongly toward the feeling that such unionization might solve the problem. Addressing this particular question the Defense Manpower Commission challenged all services in 1976 to "*enhance the status of their noncommissioned officers, encouraging further education to gain professional knowledge, raising prestige, and affording opportunities for upward mobility*" (p. 63).

Any discussion concerning the development of the modern NCO must include a few remarks about trends within the enlisted structure of the Army. Increased technology and a growing professionalization of the military caused a number of significant shifts. One shift was felt in the percentage of enlisted details which could be strictly labeled "military." One report on the "Nature of Military Duties" cited by Janowitz in *Sociology* indicated that by 1954 the percentage of soldiers performing such duties had diminished to 28.8 from 86.6 at the time of the Spanish American War (p. 47). A proliferation of associated skills also caused an increasing percentage of enlisted soldiers into the higher grades and a significant inflation of the middle enlisted ranks. Kurt Lang in "Technology and Career Management in the Military Establishment" reports that the percentage of enlisted soldiers who had reached the grade of E7 increased from 1.7 in 1935, to 3.0 in 1952, to 5.2 (6.9, USAF) in 1962. Similarly, personnel in grades E5-6 at the same time rose from 4.9, to 16.8, to 23.0 (29.6, USAF) (p. 69). The modal pay grade, as Moskos points out in *The American Enlisted Man*, moved from E1 to 1935, to E2 in 1945, to E4 in 1967 (p. 54), and despite his warning that the

E4 at this time had "no more official military prerogatives than were associated with the older private grades" (Moskos, p. 55), the upgrading of the rank structure is indicative of a movement within the organization to conform to increased technology and societal change. Such change, as Wool points out in *The Military Specialist*, was most noticeable following the Second World War (p. 34).

Another major change occurred in 1957 with the reorganization of the grade structure to include the grades of E8 and E9. Other important developments include the 1968 development of the Command Sergeants Major program; the development of the NCOES; the 1972 establishment of the CSM Academy; and the 1973 decision to implement EPMS. Often proper utilization of such programs as the Quality Management Program is offered as a means of addressing the requirement felt by a number of officers, as reported by Herzog in "QMP: NCO Professionalism" to "improve the professionalism of the NCO Corps" (p. 33). The officers surveyed cited a need for better training, more responsibility, and higher standards for the NCO. The suggestions curiously parallel what the senior Noncommissioned Officers see as an integral part of the meaning of "noncommissioned": "entry to or occupation of a position of responsibility and authority . . . based upon demonstrated competency and continued performance" (USASMA, *The Duties, Responsibilities, and Authority of NCO's*, p. 5).

Care must be taken, however, in assessing the above survey, to separate an unfortunate negative stereotype which has developed around the NCO, both within the profession and in society. In the mid-1950's a national adult survey showed that while the officer was ranked seventh in a list of occupations, following physicians, lawyers, and teachers; the enlisted soldier ranked sixteenth after farmer, plumber, and mechanic (Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, p. 227).

This is the same period that saw the publication of Huntington's landmark study:

In the modern army the professional motivation of the officers contrasts with that of the temporary citizen-soldiers who are conscripted or who enlisted because of economic or political appeals. The professional officer corps is the instrument of the state in insuring the obedience of the enlisted personnel. The latter, of course, can never develop professional motivation and the sense of professional responsibility characteristic of the West Point or St. Cyr graduate. (p. 179)

Huntington's wording is suspect. Without undermining, reducing, or denying the validity of the motivation and responsibility of Academy graduates, one may propose that such characteristics are also to be found within the NCO ranks. Huntington also fails to allow for a development in terms of the

individual's acceptance of and allegiance to the institution. The NCO twenty years into his career is still characterized and evaluated as though he were still that young private "who enlisted because of economic or political appeals." The same development seems to be denied the officer who dons the full cloak of professionalism upon commissioning. This denial of development is equally as dangerous on both sides.

The stereotype, nevertheless, is strong and persists. Take, for example, the following description from Ward Just's "Soldiers":

The NCO is successful to the degree he protects his men and serves his commanding officer. It is a job which calls for enormous objectivity, a total dedication to the rules of the institution, and a thorough knowledge of the Book, both that which is written and that which is not. (No. 4, p. 83)

By disallowing the NCO a position of professional status, one assumes that his performance can then be more easily measured. This, however, is not the case. Even the quotation above has its problems. The NCO is to be totally dedicated to the rules of the institution, no mention of values having been made, yet knowledgeable concerning the written and unwritten portions of the "Book," and then measured by his service to his commander. This is not to argue against the discipline that the NCO position often demands, rather to argue that such discipline should find its source in a dedication to institutional values. Lang in discussing the Borgatta's findings of 1955, in his own *Military Institutions and the Sociology of War*, suggests that the tendency of the NCO to be a strict disciplinarian, favoring harsh sanctions for infractions of the regulations, arose specifically from concern over the amount of authority he was at liberty to exercise (p. 70). This concern taken as a motivation for action is less desirable than "professional motivation," to use Huntington's terms.

Such a characterization of the NCO is not unique to the United States. In J. P. Thomas' study, "The Mobility of the Non-Commissioned Officers," in which he examines NCO's of the French Armed Forces, one reads that their NCO's "do not constitute a 'corps'" and that "they are 'passing through' the forces" (p. 151). Furthermore, they are divided "between two worlds and two reference systems": the "professional" technical world and the traditional "military" world (p. 152). I believe it can safely be said that the American NCO is not thus divided between two separate worlds but is participating in the fusion of these two aspects of the modern professional military. Pember Rocap, in fact, in "The Unknown Professional Soldier" suggests that modern changes "effectively erase many former distinctions between officers and NCO's in terms of responsibility and position" (p. 15). Such changes have awakened the members of the NCO Corps to their importance within and responsibility to the institution.

The question remains whether the NCO should function as a military professional or whether the NCO Corps itself should function as a separate profession. This latter position seems to be suggested by a recent draft of FM 22-600-20, at that point the project of the USASMA: "The noncommissioned officer corps of the Army exists today as a profession" (Chap. 6, p. 19). My denial of autonomous status to the NCO Corps while recognizing its members as professionals brings me to the specific formulation of a modern model for the profession which I suggested on page 10. Rather than including only regular army combat branch officers into the realm of the professional, as the traditional theorists would demand, and rather than constructing two separate and distinct professional models, I prefer to view both the NCO and the officer ranks as equally capable of inclusion in the military profession and thus mutually responsive to the military ethic.

As I have said earlier, the military ethic must function as the matrix against which the professionalism of the institution is to be observed. Specialized education, corporateness, and recognition of achievement are all structural components of this normative model. The officer and noncommissioned officer careers are similar in all points relative to this professional matrix. To explain this assertion I will take my clue from Talcott Parson's distinction of three levels (technical, managerial, and institutional) of formal organization ("The Professions and Social Structure," *passim*), choosing, for simplicity, to designate the three levels of organizational involvement *primary*, *secondary*, and *tertiary*. Complementing the organizational components are those which might best be termed "value developmental." These I have chosen to name *subjective*, in which the individual accepts the institutional values; *objective*, in which the profession recognizes the individual as member; and *dynamic*, in which the individual is himself an innovator, a principal agency of systemic change. Development along the organizational axis would be marked by specialized training, corresponding to the educational requirement of traditional models. Expertise would be specifically recognized by advancement and corporateness implicitly measured by coherence within the system. Graphically this formulation might appear as in Table 1.

Organizational	Value Developmental		
	Subjective	Objective	Dynamic
<u>Primary</u> E4-5 Basic NCOES O1-3 Adv. Crg.	Acceptance of institutional values	---	---
<u>Secondary</u> E6-7 Adv. NCOES O4-5 CIGSC	"	Institutional recognition of individual	---
<u>Tertiary</u> E8-9 Senior NCOES USASMA O6- War College	"	"	Principal participation in professional growth

Table 1. Model Showing Organizational and Value-Developmental Components of Military Profession.

This table is not designed to suggest that such boundaries are rigid, but to suggest the developmental aspects often overlooked in more classic formulations. I should, perhaps, explain why I have chosen to admit the enlisted man only at the grade of E4. The reasons are two: first, to allow for the considerations raised by Moskos which have already been cited; second, to suggest a period of training, or novitiateship prior to the point at which the individual is to be evaluated by his acceptance of institutional values. This period E1-3 is roughly equivalent to the pre-commissioning training of the officer: Academy training, ROTC, or OCS. This is not to suggest that individuals in this pre-professional period operate in value-free environments. Indeed, the values encountered in this period may be less strict, more rigid, or identical to those of the profession. Many also may question the inclusion of the E4; however, I see this as the point at which the individual soldier begins to accept the institutional values and begins to be judged against those values. Neither the promotion to E4 nor that to O-1 insures the acquisition of the subjective value-developmental component.

What then is a military professional? At which point along the organizational and value-developmental axes can we say, here then professionalism begins? The answer will never be a simple one; however, I believe we can make some valid observations concerning military professionalism by using this model. First, I believe it would be fair to include secondary and tertiary organizational members into the profession without qualification; that is, all individuals who possess at least the first two value-developmental components. This would in some way address the issues that caused the Manpower Commission's suggestion that a career be "defined as starting at 10 years of service" (p. 15) and the dilemma Rocab saw in distinguishing between the middle two levels of the all-volunteer force: the careerist who serves until retirement as though the military were merely a job and the careerist who develops a sense of service which he maintains both on and off the job (p. 18). Rocab's fourth level, that of the innovative careerist, may be seen to correspond to the dynamic (tertiary); his first, the non-careerist, to the subjective or pre-primary organizational phase.

A more difficult question, yet one which I believe answerable, is what of those individuals on the primary organizational level? Are they professionals? The answer could possibly be that they have professional attitudes, and while this would satisfy many, I cannot accept this as a valid answer to the basic question. Also, to say that they are functioning within the professional ethic is indeed to offer a valid statement, but still not to give the answer desired. I am convinced that there must be both a subjective and objective aspect to professionalism, and having said that and still anxious about the possibility of true professionals in this primary group, I must return to my earlier remark concerning boundaries. I believe that along both axes the boundaries describe a range, not a specific threshold. It is conceivable, therefore, that individuals within the primary organizational phase would receive institutional recognition prior to promotion to the required rank. I am not, however, willing to accept the commission as

such recognition. That merely allows the individual to operate within the professional ethic, offering him the opportunity to demonstrate his allegiance to institutional values. Likewise, it is conceivable for a professional on the secondary, managerial organizational level to reach the third value-developmental phase prior to entry into the tertiary organizational stage. It should again be pointed out that advancement along one axis does not guarantee progress along the other, but it is difficult to imagine the two being uncoordinated in any drastic way.

The time is fast approaching when the Huntington model, as "catchy" as the phrase "managers of violence" might be and as simply memorized as the criteria might seem, will be impossible to apply without tremendous violence being done to the actual conception of the modern military. In the profession as it is today, with Academy graduates now filtering into the ranks of non-combat branches and officers with special talents in advanced technology, language, and communications allowed to pursue these skills in roles which enhance the mission of the armed forces, one should ask whether "managers of violence" can truthfully be applied to the modern professional. This categorization developed by Huntington, doubtlessly as a result of his study of the myriad of sociological studies of the military which appeared in the late 1940's, can now be directly associated with only a small percentage of the persons functioning as professionals in the military service. Is it really violence which they manage, or is violence one, perhaps the major one, of a number of means which the modern professional force has at its disposal in pursuance of some other end? If one must say that the modern military professional is a manager of anything, I would say it must be peace, rather than violence. Defense of society and management of peace describe the modern military, not only as it is now but as it should be in the future.

To accomplish national defense the military as a legitimate institution of society has a responsibility to develop within its organization a cohesive unit of professionals functioning in whatever specific roles are deemed productive of peace and instrumental to national defense. To insure this cohesiveness, to establish a basis of professionalism within the military occupation, and to permit the legitimization of the military as an institution of society, military professional organization must be grounded within a system of institutional values derived from the society. Only when this has been realized, will the modern professional model free itself from the prejudice and narrowed perspectives of the past and assume that dynamism which most military professionals, at least informally, have felt to be such a vital part of the American system.

FEATURE FOLLOW-ON

"What Is the Ethical Code of the Noncommissioned Officer?"

by

Captain James Narel

The lead article explores the concept of professionalism as it applies to the Army's noncommissioned officer corps. Its analysis of historic, contemporary, and emerging models highlights the persistent notion that, whatever else may be required to substantiate a claim to professional status, a service-oriented, self-enforced ethic is essential. Hence, the question raised by SFC Feemster, "Isn't the NCO supposed to be ethical and morally responsible?" is seen to be inextricably bound to the issue of the noncommissioned officer's professional status.

Many who argue (or simply assume) that the NCO is a member of a professional body may feel secure in the belief that, no matter what arguments are raised regarding other criteria, NCO's, the backbone of the Army, share a set of ethical values. Who, after all, would question the dedication, the service, and the spirit of self-sacrifice that historically has characterized the actions of the Army's senior enlisted members? SFC Feemster suggests that the Oath of Enlistment is an official statement of the NCO's ethical code. In making this claim he can find support in a recent draft of FM 22-600-20, *The Duties, Responsibilities and Authority of NCO's*: "The Official written ethical codes for the enlisted personnel are the Oath of Enlistment and the Code of Conduct. . . . An unofficial ethical code is the . . . Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer." Analysis of these three sources indicates, however, that they fail, individually and collectively, to articulate in any detail or with any precision an ethic that can be used to identify the noncommissioned officer corps as a distinct and professional body.

"OATH OF ENLISTMENT"

I, _____, do hereby acknowledge to have voluntarily enlisted under the conditions prescribed by law, this ____ day of _____, 19____, in the United States Army for a period of ____ years, unless sooner discharged by proper authority; and I do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice, so help me God.

The Oath of Enlistment is a voluntary statement that has the practical effect of obligating an individual to a limited term of enlisted status. The administering of the oath is typically attended with some degree of solemnity and ceremony. This is appropriate inasmuch as it marks the willing subordination of individual freedoms to a particular body of rules for the purpose of enhancing the public welfare. This is, of course, an act with a clearly moral dimension. But the objective is the protection of a body of laws--the same laws to which every citizen is subject. And the specific obligation incurred by swearing the oath is to obey the orders of lawful authorities. The implication is that the authorities will determine how the constitution is to be supported and defended; the oath-taker has agreed to assume a supporting role in that endeavor. The oath delineates no specific duties or guiding ethic.

Moreover, the Oath of Enlistment is taken by every person who agrees to enlisted service, and hence, the oath cannot claim to identify the unique responsibilities of the noncommissioned officer. There is no intention to minimize the significance of the oath. This discussion simply points out what the oath does not do and was not intended to do. The Oath of Enlistment is not an official statement of a code of ethics for the noncommissioned officer.

For many of the same reasons, the Code of Conduct cannot be held to fulfill this function. It does not address the NCO corps directly or exclusively. Its tenets apply to all members of the American armed forces, regardless of branch, rank (commissioned, noncommissioned, and enlisted), or career status. It is clearly intended to describe the proper conduct of soldiers engaged with a hostile force. These limitations quite obviously disqualify the Code of Conduct from being the official statement of the NCO ethical code.

It appears, then, that no official code exists. What can be said of the unofficial statement, the "Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer"?

"CREED OF THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER"

No individual is more professional than I[.] I am a noncommissioned officer, a leader of soldiers. As a noncommissioned officer I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as "the backbone of the Army."

I am proud of the corps of noncommissioned officers and will, at all times, conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the corps, the military service, and my country. Regardless of the situation in which I find myself, I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety.

Competence is my watch-word. I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient. I am aware of my role as a noncommissioned officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative, by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget, that we are professional noncommissioned officers, leaders of soldiers!

Even before considering its content, one must recognize that the effectiveness of an unofficial statement depends upon the extent to which it is known, understood, and accepted by the group it seeks to represent. How widely known is the "Creed"? Only if all or most of the NCO corps is familiar and in agreement with its content can it be considered to exert any moral force on its claimed constituency. If its tenets are broadly disseminated, periodically reviewed, and frequently recalled by NCO's facing moral decisions, then the creed may indeed be said to have some vitality as an ethical code. If, on the other hand, it is simply framed and used to decorate the walls of offices, dayrooms, and dens, its function may be merely cosmetic in both a physical and an ethical sense.

If the creed is read with attention, what ethical pronouncements are there to be discerned? Its phraseology strives to be inspirational, and while the creed need not be faulted on this account, neither should its readers mistakenly conclude that because the rhetoric is lofty, so must be the content. Much of the material, in point of fact, is empty of both ethical and functional substance. Some of the other passages have meaning, to be sure, but they are without moral dimension: for example, the resolve to accomplish assigned duties and to exercise initiative. When all of this has been winnowed, does any grain of an ethic remain?

Decidedly, yes. According to the creed, a professional noncommissioned officer will (1) not use his position for personal gain; (2) strive to be technically proficient; (3) know his subordinates and place their welfare before his own; (4) be fair in recommending reward and punishment; and (5) be loyal to superiors, peers, and subordinates. Not only do these categories

constitute a statement of ethical standards specifically applicable to the noncommissioned officer, but, it might be argued, they form a fairly comprehensive code as well. They are, in fact, entirely too significant to be lost among the relatively trivial admonishments and stilted rhetoric of the "Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer." It is dangerously likely that in this disguise they will be considered suitable for framing and for little else. If they are exposed to careful scrutiny, on the other hand, they could become the basis for a more precise, formal code.

The five points enumerated above have the potential, then, to become an ethical code. They do not yet amount to such a code, even unofficially, unless they have the kind of vitality described earlier in this essay. Such vitality can only come from the NCO corps itself. If the Corps chooses to discuss them seriously and intelligently, perhaps to amend, add, or delete material, to foster them within the noncommissioned ranks, to teach their significance to junior members, to make the sacrifices necessary to implement them, to censure their colleagues who refuse or fail to uphold them, then these points or the ones that evolve from them may be claimed to reflect the ethical code of the noncommissioned officer. For a genuine code may be described in words, but its essence transcends its expression. A genuine code is not a statement but a disposition to act in accordance with principles. Only when NCO's are confident that the Corps is so disposed can they claim to have a code of ethics. And only when they have such a code, however it is expressed, can they be confident of their collective status as professionals.

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