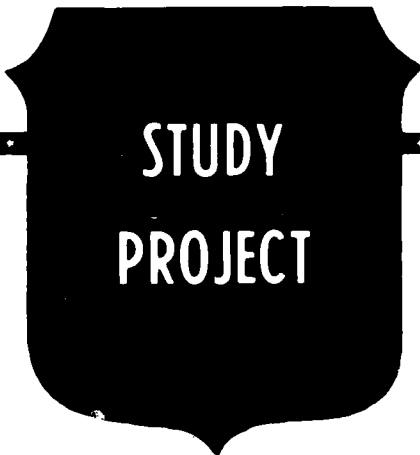


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INTERNATIONAL ARMY OFFICER'S VIEW OF ETHIOPIA
BY
CAPTAIN COLONEL JERRY L. RICHMOND

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parameters of ethical action/conduct in the Army. The proposition that such a code need only, or at least should priori, apply to the officer corps is postulated; the content, structure, and formulation of such a code is addressed; a method of promulgating and maintaining awareness and acceptance of a code is suggested; and finally, the study concludes and recommends adoption of the proposed code and enabling mechanisms.

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A FUNCTIONAL ARMY OFFICER CODE OF ETHICS

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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A FUNCTIONAL ARMY OFFICER CODE OF ETHICS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The issue to be addressed herein is that of a written code of ethics for the Army Officer Corps. As a community or institution the Army has written about and discussed at great length the subject of ethics and attendant codes. As might be expected, much of the work has addressed one particular segment of the Army--its officer corps. The Army, the other services, and the civilian and corporate world have all tried to come to grips with the ethical issues impacting their institutions as a whole and their officers/managers/leaders in particular. In some measure, each has attempted to establish ethical guidelines that provide a general, ethical framework for their respective institutions and the leadership therein. Clearly, virtually every organized body defines in one way or another what is and is not acceptable ethical conduct on the part of its members and leaders. The effectiveness of the various efforts, or apparent effectiveness, however, is a result of the confluence of circumstance and the measure one chooses to use to gauge that effectiveness at some particular event or point in time. The undertaking here is to attempt to identify and establish what that measure should be for the Army and, in particular, for its officer corps. In short, the intent is to arrive at a functional Army officer code of ethics.

Clearly the first paragraph suggests that the author begins the process with a bias that translates into an assumption that an officer code of ethics would be of value to the Army. The task then becomes to show a sufficient need for such a code, then to formulate an appropriate content and structure for such a code, and to propose a reasonable mechanism to promulgate a code. There are several ways to approach this project, ranging from looking for some sort of consensus (e.g., surveys) to the more subjective approach used in this study. The approach chosen was consistent with and a result of two factors: (1) the author's personal bias regarding the issue; and (2) the perception resulting from an initial perusal of previous efforts regarding codes of ethics for the military.

The author's personal bias certainly affected the interpretation of previous works, but one point seemed clear nonetheless--the adoption of a code of ethics for the Army or any segment of the Army would occur only if, at the highest levels of leadership, there was an already existing support for such a code. This initial conclusion seems to be applicable to a wide range of institutions wherein under normal circumstances the strength of arguments for adopting codes of ethics has little bearing on whether or not an institution adopts a code of ethics. "Under normal circumstances" is a cogent phrase since another general circumstance seems to attend the interest in and/or the adoption of codes of ethics by organizations and professions. That circumstance is external pressure for

change which typically results from some real or perceived dramatic, ethical failure within an organization, profession, or institution. Over the past forty years the military has had the adequacy of its ethical foundation called into question on a number of occasions. Some of these instances and the ensuing recriminations are worth noting to highlight the importance of the general issue: The Korean War POW's, public and congressional concern resulting in The Code of Conduct; My Lai, public and congressional concern, a very publicized courts-martial and investigation; unauthorized bombing of North Vietnam, public and congressional concern, a general officer resignation; the general perception of military mismanagement of the Vietnam War, public and congressional concern, a spate of studies both inside and outside of the military on ethical and professional conduct/actions; military academy cheating and/or honor code/system indiscretions, public and congressional concern, a heightened sensitivity, more stringent oversight, and review by outside agencies. This litany reflects not only the importance of the general issue, but it also suggests that the military historically has given away the moral high-ground and, by default, established moral ascendancy outside its own institution and profession. This need not continue to be the case. The Army can make a substantive statement about its commitment to ethical and right conduct by moving beyond the professional Army ethic in FM 100-1, The Army.

The research covered a wide range of sources, to include previous military studies on both the general issue of ethics and codes of ethics, selected articles and books on the subject, review of corporate and professional codes, a study of some of the processes designed to assist in the development of codes of ethics, and a review of selected Army publications. The scope of the research was at the same time both extensive and restricted--extensive in its general breadth, but restricted to a degree in depth since there are always other or more sources than those used in any given study.

The major limitation of this study is the same one that was evident in every study reviewed by this author--the conclusions or lack thereof that were ultimately presented could be determined very early in the study merely by the approach or construct of the study. In essence, the norm tends to be to begin with an assumed truth and then find the facts to support that truth.

To further define the author's point of departure, a number of postulates and two definitions are of some use to the reader:

Postulates

1. Current Army publications/concepts regarding ethics are infrequently read or discussed outside of a school environment.
2. What is said and what is done often can appear to be, or in fact are, different things.

3. An avowed commitment must be a part of the ritual of belonging.
4. Things are deemed special when there is something that signifies that they are special.
5. Acceptance of a code of ethics should be a rite of passage to that special status as an officer because it is a special status.

Definitions

Code: "Any accepted system of rules and regulations pertaining to a given subject; as the medical code, which governs the professional ethics of physicians; also a system of rules and regulations governing conduct in particular cases; as, the social code, the code of honor, etc."¹

Ethic: "The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation . . . a set of moral principles or values . . . governing an individual or a group [professionals]."²

ENDNOTES

1. Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, Second ed., 1983, p. 350.

2. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1979, p. 389.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR AN OFFICER'S CODE OF ETHICS

When considering a code of ethics for the Army, two questions seem essential: (1) Does the Army need a formalized code of ethics? And, if so, (2) To whom should the code apply?

The answer to these two questions will tend to be determined more by a person's personal assessment of the Army's ethical climate than by any proffered hypothesis. That personal assessment considers basically two entities or segments of the total environment. First, the self or the question: Do I need a code of ethics in order to meet my moral and professional responsibilities? Second, do others in the Army need such a code? Although this is a likely start point, it is obviously one which is too personal, too fraught with the frailties of self-image. As Raymond C. Hartjen expressed the thought in his paper on ethics, ". . . most of us view ourselves as being ethical in all, or nearly all we do. When it is suggested that some action of ours is not ethical, we are likely to take offense at the statement and respond in defense of the ethical image we hold of ourselves."¹ The issue, therefore, must be viewed not in a personal perspective but in an institutional perspective. The question should be: What might be the value of such a code to the Army as an institution? It is only in the context of the institution, its history and the fundamental precepts that define its role in society can the issue or question of a code of ethics be appropriately viewed.

As an institution, the Army has clearly defined a need for an ethic as reflected in FM 100-1, The Army. In Chapter Four of that field manual, "a statement of those institutional values and principles of conduct that provide the moral framework within which military action takes place"² is brought to partial fruition in a formalized statement of "The Army Ethic." This, however, is only one of a vast array of publications that address, amplify, prescribe or proscribe expected behavior of Army personnel in an ethical context. By the sheer number of official documents and studies written over the past twenty years or so, the contemporary Army has evidenced a searching for guidance, a way to establish a moral ascendancy for its calling. But it has been unwilling to take that last and most difficult step of adoption of a formal code to be applied to all or a part of its institutional membership.

The reasons for non-adoption of a formal code are many, beginning with the reluctance to admit that a code would have any relevance on a personal level. From this micro-view the reasons extend to such concerns or questions as those suggested by the Ethics Resource Center:³

1. Will the mere development of a code imply that the Army has something dramatically, ethically wrong that it is trying to fix?
2. Will a code of ethics cause closer scrutiny of the Army's activities by outside activities, agencies, and individuals?

3. Will the existence of a code cause perceptions of wrong-doing when in fact no wrong occurred, due simply to misunderstandings of the code and/or the action(s) in question?
4. Will a code be perceived as merely a politically motivated institutional statement rather than a statement of substantive intent?
5. Will a code be accepted by those that it is intended to guide and provide ethical sustenance to?
6. If a code is adopted, what is its content and structure?
7. How would it be promulgated?
8. What are the enforcement mechanisms?

These are serious concerns/questions indeed, but they need not continue to cause development and adoption of a code to be placed in the "too hard to do box."

Consider the current state of the Army in terms of the ethical conduct of its members. Does everything seem as it should? Are there issues, situations, or people problems that are particularly vexing from an ethical point of view? If some issues, situations, or people problems are particularly vexing, is there any particular segment of the Army whose causative involvement is most difficult to explain or accept? The answer to some parts of the questions will clearly depend on one's historical perspective. However, the question as to whose causative involvement is the most onerous is an easy one

to answer--the Officer Corps by virtue of one of its members having breached an ethical/legal boundary.

The officer corps--duty, honor, country; special trust; an officer and a gentleman; leader, commander, the old man; well and faithfully discharge the duties of an officer; an officer's word is his bond; a plethora of words and phrases that clearly reflect some higher standard of conduct is expected of an officer. This expectation is real. It is felt within the officer corps whenever a member violates a personal or professional standard of conduct. Officers will say things such as, "I don't understand how that could happen," or the "how could anyone be so dumb" comment. The greatest damage though is not within the officer corps, it is outside of it. The officer in a unit who violates an ethical standard, and it becomes known, leaves in the minds of the unit's soldiers a large question as to the faith they should put in that leader. Maybe even of larger concern is the cynicism towards leaders in general that may follow. An officer who deals with those outside of the military is clearly in a position to cause great harm if violations of that officer's charge are committed or are even perceived to have been committed. There is also a thoroughly understandable state of affairs wherein the damage inflicted on the Army as an institution is almost exponentially related to the rank of the officer involved. This skew occurs because the Army has clearly established real and perceived standards for its officers that are higher than

for the rest of its membership. Officers have no inherently higher level of goodness nor rightness than any other member of the Army. They have, however, historically been charged with a responsibility and an obligation to be the ethical standard bearers in the Army.

The Army's recent history is replete with evidence that it has not come to grips with the issue of ethics and that an oft supported step to address that issue has yet to be taken. Some of this history is both informative and suggestive of a remedy.

If the significant incidence of unhealthy command climates--in which junior officers are turned off on the Army--is not enough to cause serious concern . . . then another flood of data about command climate should grab our attention.⁴

My experience with junior officers . . . is . . . they expect and are prepared to support high ethical standards but are sometimes confused, frustrated, and disappointed by what they see as unethical behavior on the part of some of their seniors.⁵

In a 1977 survey of 2250 Army officers, it was found that:

Officers also felt that the Army should have a formalized, written code of conduct by a ratio of 2 to 1. Junior officers feel more strongly about this than do senior officers. These findings generally correspond to those of the 1970 USAWC Professionalism Study.⁶

The two most referenced military works are the 1970 Army War College study and the 1977 study by Drisko. They both indicate a wide variance between the Army's ideal values and the actual values as practiced.⁷

In one corps alone during 1980 there were 212 offenses investigated involving 133 officers serving in all grades between WO1 and Lieutenant Colonel. [And, in mid-1984 there were] more than forty officers in confinement at the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.⁸

A written code of ethics, moreover, could reinforce the educational initiatives already recommended. Without such underpinnings, the Army's ethical development initiatives will continue to be plagued with inconsistencies and voids.⁹

An opinion survey conducted in 1984 from randomly selected lieutenant colonels and colonels at three major CONUS posts "indicated a concern for ethical issues, an acknowledgement that attitudes of seniors influence the ethical behavior of subordinates, and reinforced the earlier perception that unethical behavior demonstrated by general officers goes unpunished, is covered up, or may even be rewarded . . . The implication of this perception is that a double standard for ethical behavior exists and is condoned by the organization . . ."10

A first step in the attempt to inculcate ethics is to develop an ethical code for the officer corps and soldiers that would be the basis for socializing its young novices to the profession.¹¹

The Army, and the military in general, seems to be on reasonably firm ethical footing right now and should not wait for some dramatic, negative occurrence to cause outside forces to dictate the future course of events in this arena.

General Maxwell D. Taylor stated it very well:

After surveying the many facets of this issue, I conclude that it is worth the effort to undertake the formulation of an officer code, possibly as a first step, toward one of wider scope for the entire

military establishment. Assuming that the code in final form were freely accepted and faithfully observed, it would proclaim to the world what the military profession stands for and by what standards it accepts judgement.¹²

Regardless of the absolute assurance that perfection in a code can not be obtained, that should not be cause for not making the attempt. That the need will not be universally seen nor accepted is also not sufficient reason to not act. The only real measure can and must be the potential for such a code to be a positive enhancement to the professional Army ethic and the sense of kinship in the officer corps.

Few serious observers suffer from the delusion that codes alone will dramatically improve ethical conduct. They do serve, however, as enabling devices to strive for high ideals and as a record of professional consensus. Indeed a code of practice is inherent in the very concept of professional life.¹³

Although it has been said that "the total catharsis called for by many of the Army's critics rings hollow under careful examination,"¹⁴ it would seem prudent that the Army's leadership ensure that it and not those critics are in fact determining the Army's future direction and state of being. The Army has a unique opportunity to continue as a dynamic, confident, willing to tackle the toughest and most controversial issues institution and it should accept that opportunity.

ENDNOTES

1. Raymond C. Hartjen, Jr., LTC, Ethics In Organizational Leadership. p. 3.

2. U.S. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 600-100: Army Leadership. p. 7.

3. Ethics Resource Center, Incorporated, Creating a Workable Company Code of Ethics, 1984.

4. Walter F. Ulmer, Jr., "The Army's New Senior Leadership Doctrine," Parameters, December 1987, p. 11.

5. Ibid., p. 15.

6. Melville A. Drisco, Jr., LTC, An Analysis of Professional Military Ethics: Their Importance, Development and Inculcation. p. 45.

7. Robert E. Potts, LTC, Professional Military Ethics: Are We on the Right Track? p. 1.

8. Hartjen, pp. 11-12.

9. Richard N. Murray, LTC, Ethics and the Army Officer: An Assessment and Recommendations for the Future. pp. 15-16.

10. Hartjen, p. 40.

11. Richard A. Gabriel, To Serve With Honor, p. 138.

12. Maxwell D. Taylor, "A Professional Ethic," Army Magazine, May 1978, p. 22.

13. James S. Bowman, "The Management of Ethics: Codes of Conduct in Organizations," Public Personnel Management Journal, month unk, 1981, p. 64.

14. Murray, p. 9.

CHAPTER III
CONTENT, STRUCTURE, AND FORMULATION
OF AN OFFICER'S CODE OF ETHICS

In determining the appropriate content and structure of an officer's code of ethics, several questions must first be resolved.

1. Is the code's purpose to regulate in an absolute sense or is it intended only to provide the operative ethical framework?
2. Are the values to be stated in the code already known by the officer corps?
3. Are the values generally considered operative in the current environment or are they goals to be achieved at some future time?
4. Are the values to be stated in the code sufficiently descriptive to define acceptable behavior and conduct along the broad continuum of personal, social, ethnic, and religious background of the people that constitute the Army Officer Corps?
5. Should the code establish a credo other than the duty, honor, country credo of West Point which to many is the essence of the Army credo/ethic?

Addressing each of these questions of content should provide some insight as to an appropriate structure within which to house that content.¹

The code should not be written in an attempt to provide an absolute regulatory mechanism for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, to do so would result in a code so lengthy and unwieldy that it would not lend itself to one's having a personal sense of understanding and commitment to it. The Army already has a considerable array of regulations, laws, guidance, field manuals, circulars, etc., that specify right, wrong, acceptable and unacceptable action and conduct. Consider for a moment the nature of the commitment to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). There is, of course, a responsibility to enforce compliance with that code, but contrast that with the nature of the commitment to something like "duty, honor, country." Each is a code but the commitment to each is qualitatively different. Therefore, any code of ethics should be written on that qualitatively different and higher level of commitment epitomized by the words duty, honor, country. It follows that acceptance and commitment of the nature desired is most likely to be achieved by a code that provides an ethical framework vice a legalistic code which would then have to be inclusive of every potentiality. Virtually any violation of any reasonably conceived code would automatically cause a violation of an already existing law or regulation. As a result, a code of ethics can be broadly stated and rely on existing legal enforcement mechanisms. Its strength, however, is not predicated on law but on acceptance and commitment of and to its precepts by the intended group.

The values, which equate to the framework or parameters of ethical conduct, should be known values that are currently and historically associated with the American soldier/officer. The values considered should also be generally or fully operative in the current environment. However, some measure of goal setting is inherent in the establishment of a code--if there were no goals to be reached a code would hardly be needed at all since ethical perfection would already exist. The values must have their basis in those broad Judeo-Christian concepts that are generally considered universally accepted or understood as a reasonable framework or guide for individual and/or group conduct in western cultures. A code of ethics for The Officer Corps should establish a credo in addition to or in expansion of the concept of duty, honor, country. It is essential that a code provide a more definitive framework than the West Point credo although it is also essential that it be on a similar qualitative level. Lastly, it is appropriate that a code be viewed as a framework designed for every officer without any vesting to a particular segment of the officer corps such as might exist with the West Point duty, honor, country motto.

The general content requirements and philosophical thrust of the proposed code of ethics suggests a structured, written document of a relatively short length. The code must clearly be a formal rendering in sufficient detail to adequately describe or define the operative ethical parameters but at the

same time be short enough to have a crisp intellectual and emotional impact.

Having established a conceptual framework, it now remains to determine the particular ethical values and the prescriptive and proscriptive guidelines as applicable, from which a code should be constructed. In order to take advantage of existing work in this area, it is useful to look at some of it with an eye towards capturing useful concepts from those works.

Without a doubt General Douglas MacArthur's Duty, Honor, Country speech at West Point is the most enduring broadly defined ethical framework embraced by the Army. The ideals reflected in those words have been the basis for virtually all thought on officer ethics since their promulgation. Whenever they have not been the basis, they have surely been the standard by which any other proposal has been measured. A broad ethical concept and a clearly evident, though difficult to articulate, prescription for right conduct is an inherent strength of the duty, honor, country credo. Its strongest element, however, is its tremendous appeal to and impact upon the psyche in terms of evoking a strong sense of patriotism.

The current FM 100-1, The Army, discusses at some length the professional Army ethic which "articulates our values, and applies to all members of the Department of the Army, active and reserve. . . . The professional Army ethic espouses resolutely those essential values that guide the way we live our lives and perform our duties."² The following institutional and individual

values are given as the ethical framework in FM 100-1 for all members of the Army.³

Institutional

Loyalty to the nation via the Constitution of the United States, to the Army, and to the unit.

Duty is obedience and disciplined performance, despite difficulty or danger.

Selfless Service puts the welfare of the nation and the accomplishment of the mission ahead of individual desires.

Integrity is the thread woven through the fabric of the professional Army ethic.

Individual Values

Commitment means people dedicated to serving their nation who are proud members of the Army. Patriotism and esprit de corps are the hallmarks associated with commitment.

Competence is finely-tuned proficiency.

Candor is honesty and fidelity to the truth.

Courage is the ability to overcome fear and carry on with the mission.

The ethic as outlined/defined in FM 100-1 is a clear and excellent effort aimed at providing a framework in both the institutional and individual realms. However, if it has a major limitation it may be in a lack of emotional impact which results from the four words chosen to represent individual

values. They are all useful words but only courage has an emotional appeal with competence appealing to an appropriate intellectual sensing. Commitment and candor seem to be "buzz words" which would somehow make a nice chart or poster (the four C's) but lack impact. The definitions used for commitment and candor contain words which clearly have a greater historical, institutional, and emotional significance. Instead of those two C's, consider dedicated, patriotism, honesty, fidelity, and truth--any one of which seems superior to the word for which it is a descriptor in FM 100-1.

Richard A. Gabriel has proposed a soldier's code of ethics which is useful to review for the breadth and depth it attempts to achieve.

The nature of command and military service is a moral charge that places each soldier at the center of unavoidable ethical responsibility.

A soldier's sense of ethical integrity is at the center of his effectiveness as a soldier and a leader. Violating one's ethical sense of honor is never justified even at a cost to one's career.

Every soldier holds a special position of trust and responsibility. No soldier will ever violate that trust or avoid his responsibility by any of his actions, no matter the personal cost.

In faithfully executing the lawful orders of his superiors, a soldier's loyalty is to the welfare of his men and mission. While striving to carry out his mission, he will never allow his men to be misused in any way.

A soldier will never require his men to endure hardships or suffer dangers to which he is unwilling to expose himself. Every soldier must openly share the burden of risk and sacrifice to which his fellow soldiers are exposed.

A soldier is first and foremost a leader of men. He must lead his men by example and personal actions; he must always set the standard for personal bravery, courage, and leadership.

A soldier will never execute an order he regards to be morally wrong, and he will report all such orders, policies, or actions of which he is aware to appropriate authorities.

No soldier will ever willfully conceal any act of his superiors, subordinates, or peers that violates his sense of ethics. A soldier cannot avoid ethical judgments and must assume responsibility for them.

No soldier will punish, allow the punishment of, or in any way harm or discriminate against a subordinate or peer for telling the truth about any matter.

All soldiers are responsible for the actions of their comrades in arms. The unethical and dishonorable acts of one diminish us all. The honor of the military profession and military service is maintained by the acts of its members, and these actions must always be above reproach.⁴

This code is an excellent example of one that works to achieve some sort of codification of as many aspects of potential activity as can be contained in a relatively short code. If it is found wanting it is in the measure of impact on the senses--there is little emotional strength to it. Of course, this code is written for all soldiers, not just officers, and as a result may have been intentionally written as unambiguously as possible, albeit also lacking in inspiration.

The 1970 US Army War College study on professionalism also developed and suggested an officer code or creed which is worth reviewing again.

I will give to the selfless performance of my duty and my mission the best that effort, thought, and dedication can provide.

To this end I will not only seek continually to improve my knowledge and practice my profession, but also I will exercise the authority entrusted to me by the President and the Congress with fairness, justice, patience, and restraint, respecting the dignity and human rights of others and devoting myself to the welfare of those placed in my command.

In justifying and fulfilling the trust placed in me, I will conduct my private life as well as my public service so as to be free both from impropriety, acting with candor and integrity to earn the unquestioned trust of my fellow soldiers--juniors, seniors, and associates--and employing my rank and position not to serve myself but to serve my country and my unit. By practicing physical and moral courage I will endeavor to inspire these qualities in others by my example.

In all my actions I will put loyalty to the highest moral principles and the United States of America above loyalty to organizations, persons, and my personal interests.⁵

This code, or creed, exemplifies an effort that attempts to codify, in a fashion, and inspire at the same time. It seems to provide sufficient depth and breadth of guidance to make it a very real candidate for implementation.

Both the USAWC code and Gabriel's code are structured in such a manner as to be easily rendered as a formal document. Both substantively meet the establishment of understandable ethical parameters, although the USAWC code is better in this respect. In general, either of these two codes could, with a greater or lesser degree of modification, be adopted as an officer's code of ethics for today's Army. The difficulty is in attaining the appeal to the emotions while also providing adequate ethical guidance.

A modification of the 1970 USAWC proposed code/creed meets this author's view of what an operative officer's code of ethics should be and how it should read. The modifications are intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To have early and repeated emphasis on service to country.
2. To include competence as a desirable individual value.
3. To have reference to Presidentially entrusted authority, vice Congress, since only the President is in the chain-of-command.
4. To broaden the implied base from officers in command to officers in charge. Officers are always in charge but not always designated as in command--each shares the same ethical responsibility.
5. To add reference to the Constitution which is the foundation of both enlisted and officer oaths and it is the specific thing to which our allegiance is owed.
6. To achieve a stronger emotional impact and a stronger, more patriotic, inspirational closure.

As modified, the proposed code reads as follows:

I will give to my country a selfless performance of duty and mission and the best that my effort, thought, and dedication can provide.

To this end, I will not only seek continually to improve my competence in the practice of my profession, but I will also exercise the authority entrusted to me by the President of the United States of America with fairness, justice, patience, and restraint, respecting the dignity and human rights of others and devoting myself to the welfare of those placed in my charge.

In justifying and fulfilling the trust placed in me, I will conduct my private life as well as my public service as to be free from impropriety.

I will act with honor and integrity to earn the unquestioned trust of all my fellow soldiers.

My rank and position are a temporary trust rendered unto me to serve my country and my unit and they will not be used for my own personal gain.

By practicing physical and moral courage, I will endeavor to inspire these qualities in others by my example.

In all my actions, I will put loyalty to the Constitution of the United States of America and the highest moral principles above loyalty to organizations, persons, and my personal interests.

A sense of honor and the moral principles that I know must be met are the foundation upon which I will render true and faithful service to my country in defense of the inalienable rights of all Americans.

The proposed code appears to meet the critical aspects of the postulated essential criteria of: providing an ethical framework; being comprised of generally known and accepted values; containing values that are clearly in concert with Judeo-Christian concepts of right or good; providing high but potentially achievable ethical goals; and, it does not vest any particular segment of the officer corps. The proposed code does not, however, establish a new, stand-alone credo. Rather, it expands on the basic duty, honor, country motto of West Point.

The adoption of this code would seem a logical extension and/or evolution of the professional Army ethic found in FM 100-1. Adoption would also clearly articulate to the officer corps the inherent obligation each officer has to be the

exemplar of ethical conduct. Those who would lead an institution should be and must be willing to publicly and formally commit to the ideals that have been given to the institution as a whole.

One question has not specifically been addressed and that is: Should a code of ethics be written with combat as its focus? Without question combat may provide intensely ethical quandaries wherein strength of character may be challenged in unprecedented ways. However, combat is not the normal operative environment nor is it one which day after day poses those almost unnoticed, small dilemmas which can erode a sense of what is ethical. Combat causes breaches of ethical conduct, both dramatic and less than dramatic, that have their roots in the ethical pattern established long before combat was entered into. If ethical conduct and thought is to be learned, the process must begin before the travails of combat make the burden too heavy. And, even without objective proof, it is probably safe to say that "peacetime" places more frequent ethical challenges in an officer's path and many are of a considerably more insidious nature than those challenges encountered in combat. Resultantly, a code that is focused on the broad ethical environment which is lived in day to day provides the most logical foundation for future ethical conduct under all conditions and circumstances.

ENDNOTES

1. Ethics Resource Center, Incorporated, Creating a Workable Company Code of Ethics, 1984.

2. US Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-1: The Army, p. 22.

3. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

4. Richard A. Gabriel, To Serve With Honor, p. 140.

5. United States Army War College, A Study of Military Professionalism, p. 55.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD OF PROMULGATING THE OFFICER'S CODE OF ETHICS

First and foremost, an officer's code of ethics that is promulgated or found solely in an Army publication, be it regulation, circular, pamphlet, etc., will suffer the same fate as much of the material in these publications. The sheer volume of publications reaching the field cause most to be scanned, mused over briefly, if at all, filed and forgotten. Another method of promulgation might be a one-time policy letter by the Secretary of the Army or the Chief of Staff to the officers/commands in the Army. However, here the probability is good that in a relatively short period of time the only place this policy would be found is in the policy letter file, if the file can be found.

An officer's code of ethics should be made a permanent part of every officer's development and maturation process, therefore, exposure to the code should be early, formal, and repetitive. The code should be promulgated as a formal written document that would be acknowledged in writing as is the officer's oath of office. The code can be contained in an appropriately formatted Department of the Army form. The code should be acknowledged after commissioning but very early in the initial officer basic course of instruction or any other comparable initial formal schooling. Thereafter, every officer would restate/reaffirm the code on an annual basis for as long as they serve on active duty or sometime during the training

year if a member of the reserve components. Initial and subsequent annual reaffirmation of the code could most efficiently be done on a group basis, similar to the group oath taking used in many commissioning ceremonies. This group concept is practical in either a unit or an Army school environment. There is an additional, and important, aspect to using a group reaffirmation process and that is the group bonding and commitment that would be engendered by the reaffirmation act itself. This group cohesiveness and support of the code would likely have significant psychological impact resulting in a greater commitment to the ideals and spirit of the code than would individual reaffirmations of the code.

Since units and activities would conduct this event only once each year there will be circumstances which cause a few officers to miss the annual reaffirmation. If the annual reaffirmation were to be a strict requirement, it is entirely feasible to handle the relatively small number of missed reaffirmations on an individual basis. Extending the same rationale would also provide, as an option, doing all annual reaffirmations on an individual basis, although this would negate the group bonding and commitment inherent in the suggested process.

Interestingly, as original as it was thought this general concept might be, Drisko's 1977 USAWC paper on ethics proposed essentially the same annual reaffirmation requirement. Without a doubt, in a few years someone else will look at this subject

and arrive at the same conclusion or question: Why has the Army failed to take this logical step in the legitimization of its profession and calling?

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

1. The Army has established a clear institutional need for a written ethic. That need has been satisfied, to an extent, by the "Professional Army Ethic" promulgated in FM 100-1, The Army.

2. Institutions tend to view codes of ethics more in terms of the negative external impression a code may generate than in terms of the positive internal good that should be realized.

3. Interest in the subject of ethics tends to be precipitated by outside interest in an event or events within an institution or profession that do not appear to be in consonance with stated or implied ethical parameters.

4. There is an ample body of evidence to suggest that an officer's code of ethics is appropriate and is a natural part of a "profession." It would also acknowledge the officer's clear obligation to set the standard and be the role model.

5. A code should not attempt to provide a new legal framework for ethical conduct. It should seek strength through acceptance and commitment to its ideals. There are sufficient regulatory and legal instruments in existence to effect necessary administrative and/or disciplinary actions.

6. There is either a belief, at the highest levels, that a code is needed or there is not. The relative strength

of arguments for an officer's code of ethics seems to have had little impact. This might be because it is doubted that senior leaders can effectively cause substantive change in the system that gave them success.¹

7. "The military and its officers have serious obligations that are better spelled out and defended than either assumed or ignored. Any code will have defects, will be open to misuse, and might be construed as self-serving. But if properly and conscientiously constructed, it will produce more good than harm. And that in itself is sufficient justification for developing an Ethical Code for Officers."²

Recommendations

1. That the Army adopt the proposed Officer's Code of Ethics or a similar vehicle if this particular version is deemed insufficient.

2. That the code be acknowledged by newly commissioned officers early in their officer basic or appropriate initial orientation course and that an annual reaffirmation of the code be required.

3. That the code, printed on an appropriate Department of the Army form to be used for initial and annual acknowledgement, an explanation of the code's purpose, and its relationship to "The Professional Army Ethic" in FM 100-1, be promulgated in a Department of the Army regulation.

4. That the adoption of the code receive substantial publicity through both public affairs and command channels.

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2. Richard T. DeGeorge, "A Code of Ethics For Officers," National Defense University, Military Ethics, (Washington, DC, National Defense University Press, 1987), p. 29.

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