

Argumentative Essay

Army Values and the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps

Introduction

Throughout history, the roll of the Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) has been the vital link between, the enlisted soldier, and the commissioned officer. The primary purpose of this link is to mentor and create young professionals out of soldiers. In 1973 there was a break down in this mentoring roll, this break down was so extreme that it spurred the advent of the NCO creed. The NCO creed simply put into writing the values and goals that all Non Commissioned Officers should, not only live up to, but also teach to their young soldiers. It took one year for the creeds approval, however it took over ten years to become part of the Army's teaching. The NCO creed became well adapted, and remained the standard for the next 13 years, at which time the same issued began to resurface, this resurfacing lead to the advent to the Seven Core Army Values. The values are simply a more in depth break down of the NCO creed.

Argumentative Statement

With the development of the Army seven core values, have Non Commissioned Officers become better leaders of soldiers? Has the seven Army core values replaced the importance of the NCO Creed? Has the importance of leadership from the NCO rank diminished because of the advent of the Army seven core values?

The fact is if NCO's were held accountable for their actions, and were made to uphold the standards set by the NCO creed, there would have never been the need for the advent of the seven Army core values.

Support for the Argumentative Statement

Quality leadership in the NCO corps is vital to the success of the Army, because without the link between the enlisted troops and the commission officer there would be a complete failure to communicate. It is imperative, that the relationship between the enlisted soldier and the NCO is strong enough to endure both the demands of training, as well as combat. The Army Non-Commissioned Officer plays a vital role in training future leaders in living the Army Values through living the NCO creed. This idea becomes clear when one looks at the NCO creed in the context of the Seven Army Core Values one by one.

Loyalty -- This is clearly indicated in the third paragraph of the NCO creed with the statement “I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike.(NCO creed, 2009)” These are clearly parallel statements, in fact the NCO creed not only states the need to be truthful at all times, but it goes the extra step to state to whom one should be accountable to. Soldiers at every level must be loyal to and support the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Army, their leadership, and to their fellow soldiers. Loyalty is multi-dimensional. Loyalty must be given in order for it to be received. (FM 6-22, 2006) defines loyalty as, “a two-way street: you should not expect loyalty without being prepared to give it as well... the loyalty of your people is a gift they give you when, and only when you deserve it-when you train them well, treat them fairly, and live by the concepts you talk about (FM 6-22, 2006).”

Duty – Fulfill your obligations. Duties defined by the creed as the ability to “exercise initiative by taking the appropriate action in the absence of orders (NCO creed, 2009.)” The creed not only identifies what is expected of the soldier, but it places the

responsibility of duty on the soldier. This is the key in developing of a strong enlisted corps. Every soldier of the all-volunteer Army has sworn an obligation to support and defend the U.S. Constitution, obey the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me.

Respect – Respects outlined in the creed by the statement of “the need to fulfill the obligation to fellow soldiers commission and enlisted alike (NCO creed, 2009.)”.

Respect is as per the Seven core values is merely the “Golden Rule”. Treat people in a way that we would want to be treated. Our personal and professional actions are a direct reflection of the Army institution. The responsibility of an Army leader also includes fostering “a climate in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, gender, creed, or religious belief (FM 6-22, 2006).”

Selfless Service – Field Manual 6-22 defines selfless service as “put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates above your own (FM 6-22, 2006).” This is one of the closest quotes from the creed it say “My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind—accomplishment of mission and the welfare of my soldiers. (NCO creed, 2009).” Selfless service of every member of the Army team leads to cohesiveness, discipline, and faith in the Army.

Honor – Honors expressed throughout the body of the NCO creed. First, the institution of the NCO Corps is a “time honored corps, which is known as ‘the backbone of the Army’”. Secondly, “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. (NCO creed, 2009).” The preamble of the NCO creed clearly

identifies the idea of the honor of the NCO Corps, and the importance the Army places upon the NCO Corps.

Integrity – Do what is right – legally and morally. Defined in one concise sentence “I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. (NCO creed, 2009).”

Integrity is the fundamental principle of the seven Army Values. Doing what we know is right at all times defines the character of the leader.

Personal Courage – “Our ability to face fear, danger, or adversity, both physical and moral courage”(U.S. Army Corps of Discovery, 2003). Personal courage is the underlying theme of the NCO creed as a whole. It recognized that it the ability to over come ones personal fears is the true requirement be a leader and a true professional. Personal courage enables the NCO leader to put fear aside and perform their duties as leaders.

Counter Argument

One could argue that by the advent of the seven Army core values, current enlisted soldiers are getting a head start by learning these values at basic training. One could also argue these soldiers are hitting the ground at their newly assigned units with the values that will ensure their success. It could also be argued that in setting higher standards earlier in the career, it sets the stage for better NCO's in the future. This argument would then account for the need to re-word the NCO creed in such away that it is understood by even the youngest soldiers.

Conclusion

I would still argue that unless the NCO is there to teach and mentor the young and impressionable soldiers the importance of these values, and what the consequences

will be if the values are not adhered to. The soldiers of the past, present, and more important the future, will not become the warriors that are expected of them in today's volunteer Army with out the supervision and mentorship of the NCO who is living by the NCO creed. The NCO has been held responsible to train and care for the enlisted soldier prior to the advent of the seven Army core values in 1998. The fact is there should have never been a need to create the seven Army core values, because NCO's must hold themselves accountable for their actions at all times. Regardless of the advent of the seven Army core values, the fact remains that "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' (US Army 2009)."

References

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