

## **LESSON NUMBER 13**

### **TASK: PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

**CONDITION:** In a small group discussion environment.

**STANDARD:** IAW stated Army Values

**TIME OF INSTRUCTION:** 2 hours

**LEAD IN:** As a soldier, you must be a person of strong and honorable character committed to the professional Army ethic. This lesson will provide you with the fundamentals of what a leader must be to have the moral strength and courage to make hard decisions, the professional army ethic, and the ethical decision-making process.

### **PART I: BELIEFS**

*Discussion Question:* What are beliefs?

*ANSWER:* Assumptions or convictions that you hold as true about some person, thing, or concept. Assumptions are suppositions that something is true. Convictions are strong persuasions that something is true.

*Discussion Question:* Why are your soldiers' beliefs important?

*ANSWER:* People generally behave in accordance with their beliefs. Emphasize that an individual cannot normally prove all of his beliefs. Some examples of individual beliefs that might affect individual behavior are: one soldier believes that "duty" means "8 to 5." Another believes that "duty" means selflessly serving their unit regardless of the time of day. One leader believes that rewards and punishments are the only way to motivate soldiers. Another believes that they should use rewards and punishments only in exceptional cases.

*Discussion Question:* As a soldier, why are your personal beliefs important?

*ANSWER:* The beliefs of a soldier impact directly on the leadership climate, cohesion, discipline, training, and combat effectiveness of a unit.

**Note:** Select students to explain in their own words how the personal beliefs of a leader could impact on each item in the above answer. Discuss student responses in light of these key points:

a. Leadership climate. A leader must create a climate that encourages their subordinates to want to actively participate and accomplish the mission. The key ingredients in developing this climate are mutual trust, respect, and confidence. A

leader's belief that they can not trust their subordinates interferes with the development of a good leadership climate in the unit.

b. **Cohesion.** Cohesion is the commitment of soldiers to each other. It strengthens their willingness to fight and sacrifice their personal safety. Cohesion also requires strong bonds of mutual trust, respect, and confidence.

c. **Discipline.** Disciplined soldiers do their duty promptly and effectively in response to orders, or even in the absence of orders. The elements of discipline are values, character, and the will of soldiers and leaders.

d. **Training.** Training must challenge soldiers and be as realistic as possible.

e. **Combat effectiveness.** Combat effectiveness results from a combination of leadership climate, cohesion, discipline, and training.

## **PART II: VALUES**

*Discussion Question:* What are values?

*ANSWER:* Attitudes about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or things. An attitude is a mental position, feeling, or emotion.

*Discussion Question:* How do values influence behavior?

*ANSWER:* People use their values to decide between alternative actions.

**Note:** Emphasize that personal values need not be logical. Select students to give examples of personal values that might influence behavior. (i.e. truth, money, friendships, justice, human rights, and selflessness)

*Discussion Question:* What are the seven individual values considered essential for building the trust necessary for efficient unit operations?

*ANSWER:* Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

**Note:** Select students to explain in their own words how each individual value contributes to unit effectiveness. Ensure that the student responses include these key points:

a. **Loyalty** - Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers.

b. **Duty** - fulfill your obligations.

c. **Respect** - Treat people as they should be treated.

d. **Selfless-Service** - Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own.

e. **Honor** - Live up to all the Army values.

f. **Integrity** - Do what's right, legally and morally.

g. **Personal Courage** - Face fear, danger, or adversity (Physical or Moral).

### **PART III: NORMS**

*Discussion Question:* What are norms?

*ANSWER:* Rules or laws (normally based on agreed-upon beliefs and values) that members of a group follow to live or work together in harmony.

**Note:** Select students to give examples of formal and informal norms. Examples of formal norms are traffic signals, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Geneva Conventions, uniform regulations, safety codes, and unit SOPs. Informal norms are things like this unit will not abandon casualties. Shared values are the basis of norms. As a leader, you have the power to influence the beliefs and values of your soldiers.

*Discussion Question:* Why is it important for you to nurture and shape the beliefs and values of your subordinates?

*ANSWER:* Their beliefs and values are fundamental motivating factors. You also have the power to influence the norms of your unit.

*Discussion Question:* How can you influence beliefs, values, and norms?

*ANSWER:* By setting the example; by recognizing behavior that supports professional beliefs, values, and norms; and by planning, executing, and assessing tough, realistic individual and collective training.

**Note:** Select students to explain in their own words how each action can influence the beliefs, values, or norms of their subordinates. Discuss student responses in light of these key points:

a. **Setting the example.** As a leader, you must respect your soldiers and you must earn their respect if you are to influence their beliefs and values. Subordinates will always respect your rank, but they will base their genuine respect on your demonstrated character, knowledge, and professional skills.

b. Recognizing behavior that supports professional beliefs, values, and norms. Once your soldiers respect you and want your approval, you can guide them to demonstrate unselfish concern for the unit and other soldiers. You can reinforce this behavior with positive feedback and by praising them for things they do that support duty, cohesiveness, discipline, good training, and good maintenance.

c. Planning, conducting, and assessing tough, realistic individual and collective training. "Tough" training occurs when leaders and soldiers mutually experience realistic, exhausting conditions that prepare them, as a team, for the stress of combat.

#### **PART IV: CHARACTER**

*Discussion Question:* What is character?

*ANSWER:* A person's inner strength that links values and behaviors.

*Discussion Question:* Why is character important? How can you build your own character?

*ANSWER:* Soldiers want leaders who provide strength, inspiration, and guidance to help them become winners. The soldiers' assessments of a leader's character determine whether or not they are willing to trust their lives to that leader. To build your own character you can: assess the present strength of your values and character. Determine the values you want to promote. Seek out missions and situations that support developing such character. Select a role model that demonstrates the values and character you are trying to develop.

*Discussion Question:* How can you influence the character of your soldiers?

*ANSWER:* By eliminating counterproductive beliefs, values, and behaviors. Leaders will not be able to influence the beliefs, values, and character of all soldiers. They can help soldiers to develop character if the soldiers want to change.

#### **PART V: PROFESSIONAL ARMY ETHIC**

*Discussion Question:* What is the professional army ethic?

*ANSWER:* The doctrinal statement is in FM 100-1. The ethic sets the moral context for service to the nation and inspires the sense of purpose necessary to preserve the nation, even by using military force. *Discuss student responses in light of these key points:*

a. Loyalty means being loyal to the nation, the Army, and the unit. Loyalty to the Army means supporting the military and civilian chain of command. Loyalty to the unit expresses both the obligation between the leaders and the led and the shared commitment of soldiers to other soldiers.

b. Duty means accomplishing all assigned tasks to the fullest of your ability.

c. Selfless service means that you must resist the temptation to put self-gain, personal advantage, and self-interests ahead of the interests of the nation, the Army, or your unit. Your rank and position are not personal rewards. You earn them so that you can better serve the nation, the Army, and your unit.

d. Integrity means being honest and upright, avoiding deception, and living the values that you suggest for your subordinates. Integrity is the basis for the trust and confidence that must exist among members of the Army. The concepts of beliefs, values, norms, and character are fundamental to an understanding of professional ethics.

*Discussion Question:* What are ethics?

*ANSWER:* Ethics are principles or standards that guide professionals to do the moral or right thing. As a leader, your commitment to the professional army ethic requires you to fulfill three ethical responsibilities. They are:

a. Be a role model. You are on display at all times and your actions speak louder than your words.

b. Develop your subordinates ethically. You must shape the beliefs and values of your soldiers to support the values of the nation, the Army, and the unit. You develop your subordinates by personal contact and by teaching them how to reason clearly about ethical matters.

c. Avoid creating ethical dilemmas for your subordinates. Since your soldiers will want to please you, do not ask them to do things that will cause them to behave unethically.

d. The key to fulfilling your ethical responsibilities is ensuring that your own behavior is ethical. This may not seem to be a problem. In most situations, the ethical course of action is obvious. The real question is whether or not you have the character to live by sound professional values when under pressure. Sometimes, however, you will find yourself in complex situations where the right ethical choice is unclear. When in such situations, you should use a decision-making process to help you identify the course of action that will result in the greatest moral good.

*Discussion Question:* What are the steps in the ethical decision-making process?

*ANSWER:* Interpret the situation, analyze factors and forces, choose course of action, and implement course of action.

**Note:** Take a minute to read the student handout. Identify the ethical dilemma in the Student Handout. Remind the students that ethical dilemmas exist when two or more deeply held values collide. The basic problem in this situation is a conflict between the

value of "mission accomplishment" and the value of "obeying the laws of land warfare." Remember that each student perceives the situation in terms of his/her own personal beliefs, values, norms, and character. It is possible that some students may not value either "mission accomplishment" or "obeying the laws of land warfare" highly enough to perceive the ethical dilemma in this situation.

*Discussion Question:* What is the second step in the EDM process?

*ANSWER:* Analyze all the factors and forces that relate to the dilemma.

**Note:** Select students to explain how each force in this model might have a bearing on the problem. Ensure that student responses include these key points:

a. Laws, Orders, and Regulations. The law of land warfare requires soldiers to avoid the unnecessary loss of civilian life and property. Your concern that violations of the law of land warfare fall under the UJMC might influence you to choose another course of action.

b. Basic National Values. Our country has a public commitment to defeat an enemy in battle. This commitment, however, does not condone the use of all available means, only what is militarily necessary to win. There is also a "principle of proportionality" that requires that violence in war must not create a greater evil than it seeks to destroy. Our country also has a public commitment to respect the rights and safety of civilians caught in the area of military operations. This commitment does not require that we abandon any plan that endangers civilians; rather we strive to minimize civilian casualties. Your interpretation of these commitments might influence you to call for mortar fire on the house. On the other hand, the psychological effect on both the local nationals and the American public could do more damage to the war effort than you would gain from aggressive actions. This consideration might influence you to choose another course of action.

c. Traditional Army Values. Mission accomplishment, concern for the safety of subordinates, and loyalty to the unit are all values that might influence you to call for mortar fire on the house. Obeying the laws of land warfare and showing concern for the innocent might influence you to choose another course of action.

d. Unit Operating Values. Unit norms are unknown in this example. Some units might have inappropriate norms that could influence you to make a hasty decision:

- "In combat, the end justifies the means."
- "If the enemy violates the laws of war, then the laws of war no longer apply."
- "The safety of U.S. troops and equipment is more important than the safety of civilians or damage to any buildings."

e. **Your Values.** It is impossible for anyone to determine in a classroom exactly what he/she will think or feel in combat. Past experiences and strongly cherished values would influence your decision. **Institutional Pressures.** The previously issued directive that urged fast, aggressive action might influence you to call for mortar fire.

*Discussion Question:* Since ethics is a part of leadership, what other factors should you consider in the ethical decision-making process?

*ANSWER:* You should also consider the four factors of leadership--the led, the leader, the situation, and communications.

**Note:** Select students to explain how each of the four factors of leadership influences the choice of a course of action. The following are some examples of how the factors of leadership may influence the course of action:

a. **Led.** Your concern for the welfare of your soldiers could influence you to call for mortar fire.

b. **Leader.** Your concern to accomplish your assigned mission could influence you to call for mortar fire. Your concern to protect yourself from the consequences of a bad decision could influence you to "pass the buck" to your commander.

c. **Situation.** Your knowledge of your own limitations in ethical situations might also influence you to "pass the buck."

d. **Communications.** Effective communication does not appear to be a major consideration in this situation. Your soldiers freely communicated their concerns to you. Your desire to maintain this bond should influence you to carefully consider their concerns when identifying and evaluating courses of action.

*Discussion Question:* What is the third step of the EDM process?

*ANSWER:* Choose the course of action you believe will best serve the nation.

**Note:** Emphasize to the students that the course of action chosen must be the one that best serves the nation, not themselves or their superiors. Explain to the students that identifying and evaluating possible courses of action are implied steps. Select several students and have them identify possible courses of action. Some possible courses of action are:

a. Call for mortar fire on the house--the "mortar fire" course of action.

b. Communicate your situation to higher authority and take no further action until given directions--the "wait-for-further-instructions" course of action. Engage the enemy

patrol in the house using tactical means of limited destruction; e.g., Sniper fire, squad or platoon assault, etc.--the "sniper/assault" course of action.

**NOTE:** Select students to weigh the alternative courses of action in terms of influencing forces and principles. Guide student responses to the following key points:

a. The "mortar fire" course of action aims at mission accomplishment and the safety of your soldiers but violates the law of land warfare.

b. The "wait-for-further-instructions" course of action is more supportive of the law of land warfare and your personal concern for the safety of innocents, but it could cost the lives of more of your soldiers.

c. This "sniper/assault" course of action supports the law of land warfare and our nation's commitment to the safety of innocents, but it could also cost the lives of more of your soldiers.

Finally, poll the group to select a course of action.

*Discussion Question:* What is the final step of the EDM process?

*ANSWER:* Implement the course of action you have chosen.

**Note:** Emphasize that success in this step really depends on the character of the leader. Identifying the ethical course of action is often easier than implementing it. Poll the group to identify some consequences of the chosen course of action. The group may favor the "wait-for-further instructions" course. Some students may prefer the "sniper/assault" plan. Remind these students that it will require a substantial amount of moral courage to adopt a plan that protects civilians by exposing one's own soldiers to added risks. The students should avoid the "mortar fire" course because any attack that disregards the safety of civilians could work against the interests of the United States and make the establishment of a lasting peace more difficult.

## **PART VI: SUMMARY**

In this lesson, we discussed the professional army ethic and the ethical decision-making process. Your ability to lead flows from your individual beliefs, values, norms, and character. Your ability to inspire soldiers to do the brave and right thing flows from the example you set. The professional army ethic contains the values that guide the way leaders should carry out their professional responsibilities. When faced with a situation where the right ethical choice is unclear, you must be able to use the ethical decision-making process to resolve the dilemma. You must have the moral strength and courage necessary to make hard decisions.

## STUDENT HANDOUT

You are the first sergeant of Team A, TF 1-77. Your company is occupying security outpost positions in a farming region of some country. It is just after dark and you are at the company headquarters in a barn. You hear gunfire from the direction of your company's checkpoint by the road. SFC Jones, your reaction force leader, runs to get his men and you run to the checkpoint.

You arrive at the checkpoint and find three dead enemy soldiers. Two of your soldiers, PFCs Smith and Brown are also dead. SGT Phillips, the checkpoint NCO, received wounds in the fighting. As you begin first aid, he tells you that three enemy soldiers ran into the farmhouse across the road.

SFC Jones and his reaction force arrive in time to hear SGT Phillips tell you about the enemy soldiers in the farmhouse. SFC Jones wants to call for mortar fire on the farmhouse, but SGT Phillips tells you that the family living in the farmhouse brought coffee and food to the checkpoint just before dark. SGT Phillips doesn't want to repay the family's kindness by destroying their house or killing them.

You know that the law of land warfare requires you to avoid the unnecessary loss of civilian life and unnecessary destruction of civilian property, but you have already lost two men and don't want to lose any more. Your mission requires you to take rapid, aggressive action to kill or capture enemy soldiers in your area. If you don't do something fast, the enemy soldiers may leave the farmhouse and continue their mission. What should you do?