

Ethics 101: Ethical reasoning process

By SGM Mark Kalinoski

(Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part article on the Army's decision-making process. In this issue, the author explains the current thought on making decisions. Next issue, we'll bring the readership up to speed on the latest thoughts on the decision-making process. The process will change soon, with additional steps that promise to ease the task of ethical decision making.)

Like most fathers, I've been known to dote on my children by buying them gifts. Also like most fathers, I buy them presents on major holidays and on their birthdays. And the present they seem to get the most

excited about — at the age they are now — is a new bicycle.

If you are like me and like to save money, you buy the kind of bike that comes in pieces, unassembled, in a box. It's cheaper that way.

I know I am not the only father who has taken that box of bicycle parts and, with all good intentions, torn into the process of putting it together. We have a tendency to throw the instructions aside. We start tightening the clamps, spinning the bolts, and turning the screws. Before you know it, you succeed in transforming it into a sleek new two-wheeler.

There is only one problem. You never really looked at the instructions. As you look at this vehicle, you know that you worked hard on it. You used your intellect and did your best to put it together properly. And there were, for the most part, no parts left over to make you wonder if this thing was going to fall apart the minute your child climbed aboard.

But still, without following the instructions, you have to wonder if it is as good and sound as it could possibly be. Maybe you missed something. Maybe a certain bolt was too tight, or too loose, or had been inserted the wrong way.

Ethical decision making in the Army is a lot like putting that same bicycle together. The Army has provided us with instructions to help us make the decisions that we as leaders need to make every day. The instructions I'm talking about are in FM 22-100, Army Leadership, specifically, the Ethical Reasoning Process.

When I was a very young soldier, I always thought that



the Army literature on issues like ethics, leadership and values were the books you cracked a few days before you went before a promotion board, or maybe skimmed over while attending professional development courses. How in the world was someone supposed to find time to read a book on decision making, when you are so preoccupied with *the mission* and so busy making decisions?

Just like people are of a nature to put a bike together without looking at instructions, I thought that people were all of a nature to make ethical judgments. Everyone knows that a person's ethics are shaped by the way they are raised by their family, through participation — or lack of participation — in religious activities, by playing sports, and just through general experience.

If ethics are all about common knowledge and common sense, then a book on ethical decision making must be written for someone without common knowledge and common sense. Right? That is wrong, and it is dangerous to assume that.

I've served in many leadership positions and I've survived, as most NCOs do. The immediate thing I realized when I was a first sergeant is that there was continual conflict all around. Whether you looked up at superiors, down at subordinates, or to the left and right at your peers, there was always a competing issue or problem that demanded you touch it and affect it in some way.

Any leader knows that there are some tough calls to make out there. And any leader knows that when you make a decision you need a leg to stand on. You need "something" solid and unwavering ... you need a "reason" for each and every decision you make or action you take, no matter how large or how small.

The resources in FM 22-100 can give you that reason. They are the instructions I spoke of earlier. The problems

that you work through daily are the pieces of the bicycle. By applying the ethical reasoning process the FM outlines, you can back up any decision you make, with anyone, and anywhere.

It sounds simple, and it is. Most good tools are. FM 22-100 defines the process as follows:

- define the problem
- know the relevant rules
- develop and evaluate courses of action
- choose the course of action that best represents Army values

We've heard about the Army values again and again. Perhaps we've heard them so many times that they become background noise and we no longer notice them. That's because as leaders, we are all busy. We are all consumed with our daily duties and our mission. But no matter what the mission, you must always take time to reflect. Though it may be difficult to find time to reflect on the Army values — Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal courage — it is time well spent.

It is comforting to me — and it should be for you — to know that the Army of today, with its hectic pace and competing demands, took the time to provide us with the tools we need to help us succeed as leaders and invariably make the right decisions. All we have to do is let the ethical reasoning process work for us and let the Army values guide us in every decision we make.

If we can all do that, we'll be bulletproof ... in the Army and in life. All we have to do is follow the instructions.

SGM Kalinoski is the III Corps PAO Sergeant Major, Fort Hood, Texas.

Sources for learning about ethical decisions

Ethics, A Selected Bibliography was compiled in support of the William G. Bainbridge Chair of Ethics established to further the study of ethics at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.

The following is an extract of selected readings NCOs may be able to find at their learning resource centers:

Books

Brown, James. ed. *MILITARY ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM: A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS*. Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1981

Gaston, James C., ed. *ETHICS AND NATIONAL DEFENSE: THE TIMELESS ISSUES*. Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1993.

Books (Cont.)

Maihafer, Harry J. *BRAVE DECISIONS: MORALE COURAGE FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO DESERT STORM*. Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1995.

Articles

Anderson, Jon R. "Blow the whistle, lose your job." *ARMY TIMES*. Mar. 7, 1994, pages 12-14+.

Garcia, Elroy, SSG. "We're here to help [New image of the Inspector General]." *SOLDIERS*, Oct 1982, pages 10, 11.

Toner, James H. "Teaching Military Ethics." *MILITARY REVIEW*, May, 1993, pages 33-40.

NCOs bear the ethical standards in their units

By SGM Abe Vega

As NCO leaders we are the ethical standard bearers within our organizations. As we **do**, so **does** the rest of the unit. As leaders, we must be good in judgment and sound in our ethical reasoning. We do not get a second chance to recover from unethical conduct, nor should we.

Good leaders possess sound ethical principles and by our example, build ethical climates in units consistent with Army values. In so doing, we mentor and develop ethical leaders for the future.

Consider the notion that someone new to the Army may not fully understand the importance of ethical behavior nor realize its impact on the mission.

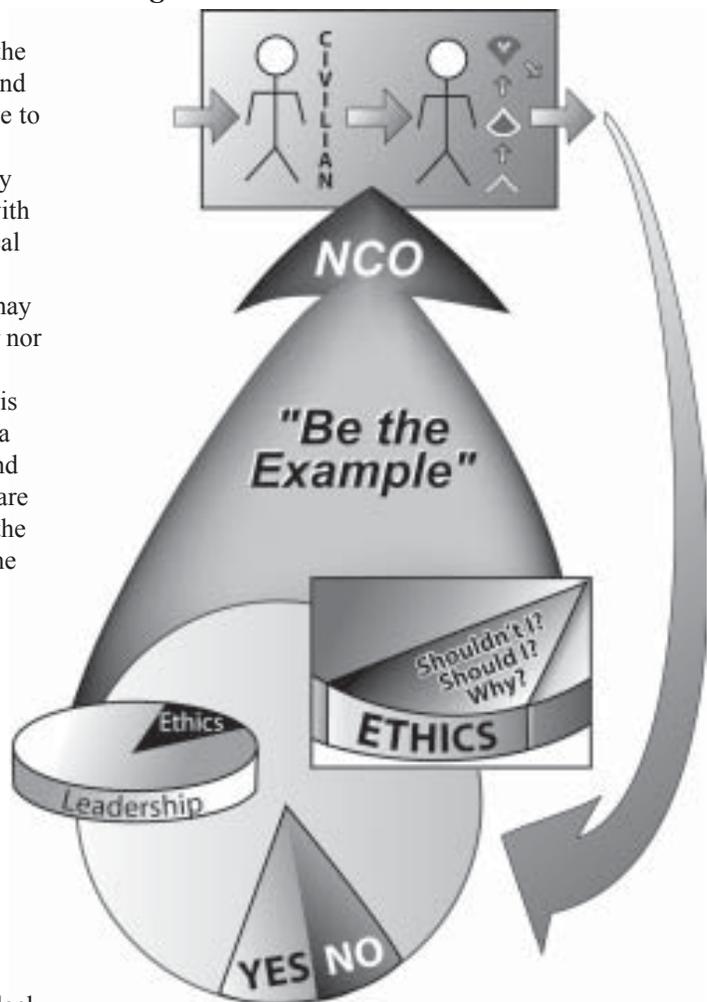
Every man and woman who enters the Army brings his or her own set of values. They acquire these values as a result of their upbringing within their socioeconomic and political environment. However, not all of these values are compatible with military service. What then, serves as the ethical guide for our young men and women entering the Army today?

The answer is Army values. The Army values lay the foundation for the accepted rules of conduct for every soldier. The Army values assist new recruits in developing the moral principles necessary to serve in the Army. Of the seven Army values, **honor** is the most important. Soldiers who are **loyal**, perform their **duty** to the utmost of their ability, consider others and treat everyone with **respect**, **serve selflessly** with the utmost **integrity**, and display **personal courage** in everything they do are **honorable** men and women.

We cannot deny the fact that we live in challenging times. In my opinion, many of our young people today lack the moral and ethical foundation we expect in our soldiers. As such, it is incumbent upon us as leaders to instill in them a sense of honor and morality.

Ethics are an aspect of leadership that does not include a gray area. Leaders will either behave ethically or unethically. For those who choose the latter, it will discredit them as leaders and will lead to their downfall and the disruption of their unit.

Remember the actions of past leaders who betrayed our nation's trust. The actions of NCOs such as those involved in the incidents at Aberdeen Proving Grounds brought discredit to the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers. Their lapse in ethical reasoning led to their professional demise



and brought humiliation to all of those who wear the uniform.

Leaders are on display at all times. Soldiers will model them and do as they do. Hopefully all leaders will be honorable men and women who set ethical examples for soldiers. We cannot simply talk about ethics and ethical behavior. We must set the example in everything we do.

America trusts us to defend and support the Constitution of the United States. We must do so proudly, with honor and with a high sense of morality.

SGM Abe Vega is on staff at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.

The NCO role in procurement

SGM Ethan A. Jones

The success and effectiveness of 21st-century warfighters will depend immensely on transforming and/or reducing the logistics trail. For every combat soldier on the firing line, nearly 30 soldiers are working in a tail from the body of troops to the factory in the rear that produced the bullets. Moving the Army into threatened areas in the future will require a drastic reduction in the tooth-to-tail ratio.

One of the key resources to achieve this is contracting, which is an integral part of the U.S. Armed Forces support structure. Contracting efforts are also helping the Army realize its vision of mobilizing and deploying brigade combat teams within 96 hours, and developing faster, lighter and more lethal forces. Effective contracting support planning requires continuous and proactive command involvement and intensive education and training.

But, although most Army acquisitions come through formalized channels, innovations in the procurement arena have placed NCOs Armywide in positions where they must make ethical decisions about how and where to spend government funds. An understanding of the contracting process overall can help NCOs understand their roles and play a part in combating waste, fraud and abuse.

The Army's special staff component for contracting issues is the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting. The PARC and the command's warfighting staff sections must work closely together to train and understand contracting processes and how they apply to their mission requirements. Military and civilian PARCs/ commanders within the Army contracting command structure who support warfighting commands are responsible for developing and revising contracting support plans

that meet requirements of the warfighter operational plans and logistics annexes.

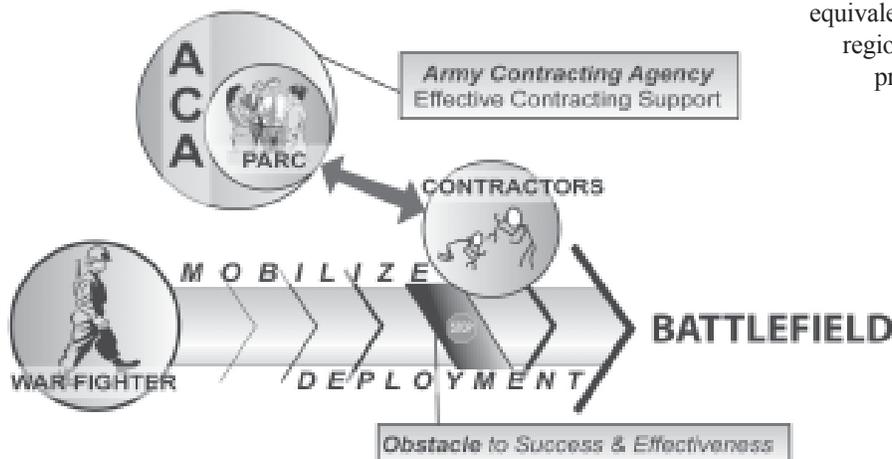
Typical tasks in the contract planning process are varied:

- planning for various contingency operations;
- articulating contracting procedures, authority and deviations;
- lending contract support to units;
- ensuring units understand and conduct site surveys, exercises and pre-deployment training;
- ensuring contracting, resource management and finance support are included in contingency OPLANs;
- conducting market surveys to identify available commercial supplies, services and equipment in the mission area;
- advising commanders and logistics planners how contingency contracting can best support and accomplish their mission and explaining to those commands that every area of responsibility has a PARC who oversees and is responsible for all contracting issues within the theater of operation;
- expeditiously contracting the workload and resolving complex contracting issues.

In addition, Army contracting NCOs contribute to overseeing and using the Government Purchase Card, processing purchase requests, and educating and monitoring field ordering officers about unauthorized commitments. Class A agents receive formal training through local finance support channels.

Warfighters are responsible to know and understand their roles in using contracting. Brigade, battalion equivalent contracting commands, centers, regional and installation contracting offices provide Army contracting support.

In austere environments, commands/units will designate FOOs and Class A agents in a formal memorandum through contracting and finance channels. Contracting NCOs will train FOOs on the use of Standard Form 44, Purchase Order-Invoice-Voucher, and finance personnel will brief Class A agent responsibilities. The SF44 is used to acquire off-the-shelf supplies





The Transformation will require greater NCO involvement in procurement.

and services below the micro purchase threshold, under \$2,500; a warranted contracting NCO is authorized to use SF44 for purchases above the \$2,500 threshold. The Class A agent is responsible to carry, protect and maintain receipts or a ledger for monies in his or her possession. The FOO and the Class A agent work together in environments where hard currency is the only accepted or authorized means for acquiring goods and services. The Class A agent maintains the monies, the FOO executes and processes the SF44, the contracting NCO ensures the FOO reconciles with the finance office prior to clearing the area of responsibility.

In a more mature environment, the GPC can be utilized and contracting NCOs have the means to make purchases on behalf of the U.S. Government. The GPC may be used by non-contracting personnel up to the micro-purchase threshold of \$2,500 per purchase. Based on special circumstances, some activities authorize individuals a limit up to \$25,000 per purchase. Contracting NCOs in contingency operations have warrants up to \$200,000, but that limit can be raised based on the situation.

Another means of acquiring supplies and services in a mature environment is through contracting channels on DA Form 3953, Purchase Request and Commitment. Requiring activities will request and process their requirements on DA Form 3953 through their G4/S4 for oversight and compliance or approval. DA Form 3953 is forwarded through Resource Management for funding and then to a contracting office/ NCO for processing. The contracting NCOs cannot split requirements, purchase items beyond the funding limits or commit the U.S. government without proper cause. Contracting NCOs are of the strongest character, have to make sound business decisions, be tactically aware and, like all others in the field, are ethically challenged each and every day. Contracting support planning, training and educational processes are continuous and ongoing due to frequent changes in federal acquisition laws and personnel turnover.

Another force multiplier on the battlefield is the contractor. DoD contractors are a critical link between the Army Service Component Command and the functional/ logistical systems they support. Documentation is being developed to identify required contractors and enter information on them in the Time-Phased Force Deployment Data. TPFDD is simply the phases or timelines that units are deployed from CONUS or OCONUS to the theater of operations. Policies are also being developed to support contractors on the battlefield and implement their support within the warfighter command structures. The policies will assist commanders to monitor, manage, deploy, protect, and provide logistical support to the contractors on the battlefield. The proposed doctrine will require contractors to develop and provide support plans that tie directly to the command's operational plans/ logistics annexes. This support plan will ensure that contractors receive the necessary life support to fulfill their missions while remaining transparent to the warfighter.

SGM Jones was selected as the first ever Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Contracting Command, Europe. He serves concurrently as the Sergeant Major, Joint Contracting Centers, Balkans and as the Sergeant Major to the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting in U.S. Army, Europe.

Taking the NCO Corps into the 21st century

Leaders of the Continental Army envisioned a military that would secure the people of the new free world from oppression imposed by nations with different beliefs and values, a military that would stand the test of time, be able to conform to changing missions and act on behalf of the people. Realizing in order for this to take place and armed with the knowledge that the foundation had been laid, a building block was needed in order for the institution to remain steady.

The NCO has been given the title *The Backbone of the Army*, and NCOs are that building block. A lot has been written on the subject. However, another correlation can be made. The NCO can also be viewed as the cornerstone of the U.S. Army.

A successful organization must constantly evaluate itself and incorporate recommended and needed changes necessary to the well being of the organization in order to remain successful. As the world adapts and evolves to the current situation it finds itself in, so must we.

The responsibility of NCOs from the moment of their transition into the corps to the day they remove their uniform for the last time remains the same: ensure soldiers are trained, standards are enforced and traditions are kept sacred. Training soldiers is an extremely daunting task when considering someone's father, mother or loved one has entrusted you with their most cherished possession and expects you to ensure a safe return.

Whether we find ourselves on point for the nation, ensuring a refugee is fed and sheltered or in our own

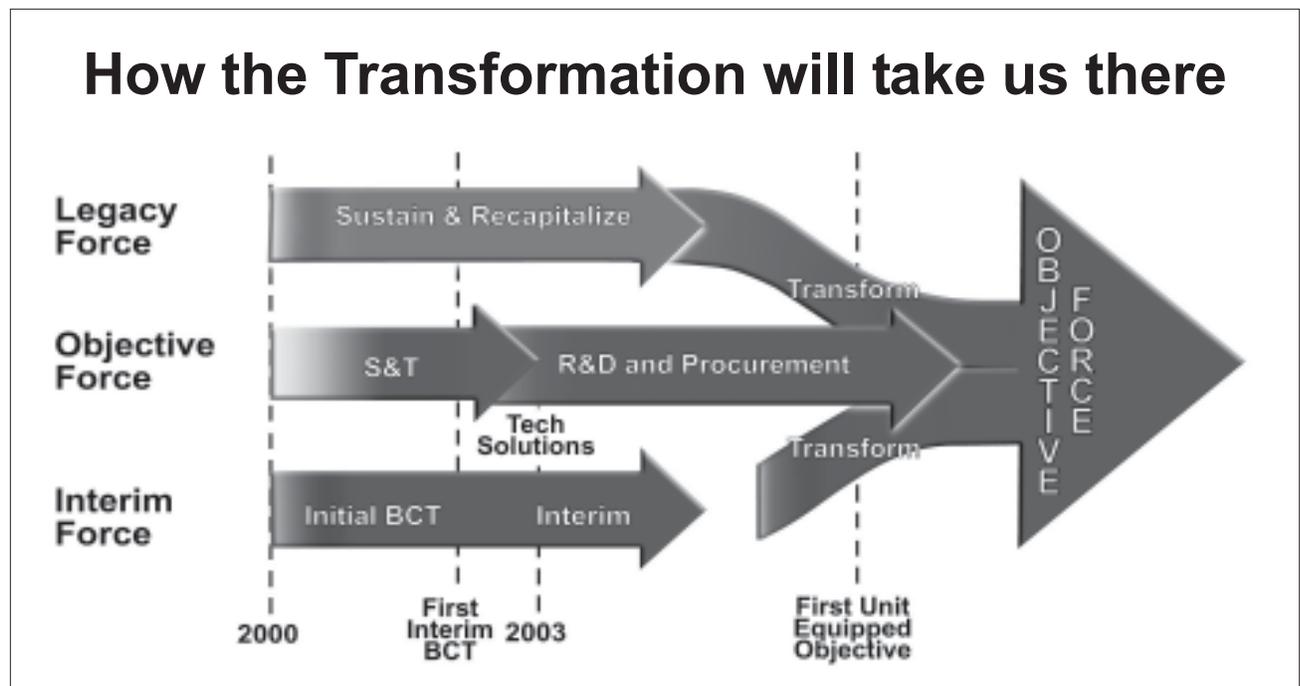
backyard conducting sergeant's time training, standards are our utmost priority, coupled with the added dimension of ensuring the safety of America's sons and daughters. How do we ensure this happens? It is a multi-faceted task.

First, we ensure that the training of enlisted soldiers is conducted to standard. Merely checking the block and adding a footnote that your soldier needs further training is insufficient. This apathy could someday result in the loss of life. The training we conduct must be continuously practiced, until the newest soldier is proficient enough to act instinctively and without hesitation. Second, we must enforce our role as leaders.

There is no doctrine that states what is and what is not *Sergeants' Business*, simply because in every aspect of the Army there is an NCO somewhere with an eye on the target ensuring standards are enforced. If NCOs allow standards to drop, our responsibilities will erode to a point where our position no longer commands respect to those around us.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. This is a very powerful yet ambiguous statement contained in the NCO Creed. Where is the line drawn between NCO and officer duties?

We have to remember that we not only train enlisted soldiers, we also advise commissioned officers. It is primarily the responsibility of platoon sergeants to advise platoon leaders and first sergeants or command sergeants major to advise company commanders and higher. How-



ever, at all levels the NCO must always act in a professional manner as well as display unquestionable military bearing. As the *Backbone of the Army*, we must have the foresight needed to ensure our humbling responsibilities remain ours. In essence our effectiveness for training soldiers could forever be tarnished if we breach that trust between officers and NCOs. We must realize the platoon leaders we are advising, and conversely who are watching the Corps of NCOs today, could very much be the commander of a company, battalion, brigade or higher tomorrow.

If we take the easy wrong over the hard right we cannot blame the status of the military on anyone but the person looking back from the mirror. This is easy to lose sight of because it is not the here and now, but if we forget, it will degrade one of the most revered militaries in the world.

Army Regulation 600-100 defines leader development as *a process that prepares military and civilian leaders through a progressive and sequential system of institutional training, operational assignments, and self development, to assume leader positions and exploit the full potential of present and future doctrine.*

Members of the NCO Corps, as guardians of the standards, place a great deal of emphasis on this process to keep it functioning properly. One way this is accomplished is by ensuring our soldiers are properly prepared and motivated for all NCO Education System courses, and by providing peace of mind in knowing their families will be supported and taken care of in their absence. We also

guide and mentor them in their career paths, giving advice when needed, allowing them room to make mistakes in order to promote self-growth and allowing them the opportunity to lead. Just as platoon sergeants advise and guide platoon leaders in order for them to become successful and eventually gain command, competent NCOs guide and advise soldiers to eventually take their place as the *Backbone of the Army*.

The building block where an organization begins, whether the organization's a squad or a major command, does not matter. What does matter is the cornerstone. It must be and remain solid, fortifying the foundation it is built upon. The NCO Corps, the foundation and cornerstone, is in place and has proven that NCOs can withstand the test of time. It is up to us to remain vigilant, keeping the organization intact. In all we do, both on and off duty, we need to remember that we are professionals, a part of an organization that is rich in tradition and honor. The nation has placed great responsibility upon our shoulders to protect the future of this premier force, keep it fit, lean and prepared at all times, ready for anything and everything we are called upon to accomplish. As our Army moves into the 21st Century, our vision needs to remain focused, our posture forward, our actions precise and with purpose.

The world looks to us with awe and wonderment and asks how can a society so young have a military force with such presence. The answer, of course, is the NCO.

Uniform quiz challenges readers

(Editor's note: We thought we'd let a first sergeant do our light work. Just to clarify one point, SGT Jodi Barth is taking part in a demonstration, and the uniform problems are there by design to challenge students at the Fort Gordon, Georgia Junior Leadership Skills and Development Course. Many thanks to the hundreds of soldiers who participated.)

Let me commend the 206th JLSD course for raising the bar for soldier development. Though this course does not replace the junior soldier's first technical and tactical challenge away from his or her command, it clearly provides the preliminary concept for enhancement to be used throughout all Army units.

We have recognized 11 issues on the portrait presented in the Summer edition:

- Hair below bottom of collar

- Non-complementary lipstick
- Earrings
- Chain around neck
- Folded sleeve on right arm
- Non-complementary nail polish
- Unauthorized wear of rings
- BDU cap protruding out of right cargo pocket (trousers)
- Unauthorized blouse of trousers
- Boots untied (both)
- Incorrect color of socks (tape on leg)

Thanks for this demonstration. My soldiers and I enjoyed the time spent discussing the obvious uniform violations that sometimes go without correction.

We, the SCORPIONS, are proud to be a part of this process.

*1SG Ron Bethea, Sr.
Fort Riley, Kansas*



Ethical behavior in the school environment

Interview by SFC Sheila Tunney

Soldiers attending formal schools have their own ethical decisions to make, and for aspiring sergeants attending an NCO academy, those decisions and how they're made can affect the sergeant's outlook forever.

CSM Mary Starmer, commandant of the 104th Division NCO Academy, Fort Lewis, Wash., came in shortly after the Women's Army Corps became fully integrated into the Army. She made it to the top of the NCO Corps ranks, raised a son mainly on her own and spent 20 years off and on in night school earning a college degree. The ethical decisions she had to make along the way have provided her with the background to shape tomorrow's leaders' ethical decision-making skills.

"This academy has a code of ethics," Starmer said. "I look at ethics from a layman's view. We have regulations and other doctrinal materials that tell us how to *behave*. But when the doctrine leaves room for interpretation — which is often — a soldier's personal ethics become involved. These personal ethics tell the soldier what is right and wrong based on the soldier's individual value system."

Instilling a desire to behave ethically can be half the battle of raising NCOs who act in ways that are morally and ethically correct.

"The more I can communicate my own value system to soldiers, the less gray area there is left for my soldiers," Starmer said. "That's because it will be clear to them what I believe to be right and wrong. For example, I make it clear to my instructors what I think constitutes inappropriate behavior with students."

Starmer carried that example further to illustrate the shadings of ethical decisions.

"We have situations here that we know are clearly unlawful, like inappropriate student-instructor relationships. These fall into a black

area," she said. "We have laws we know and trust that fall into a white area — we follow them. All of those in-between issues, situations that aren't in violation of a regulation but that might not meet the spirit of the law, fall into the gray area."

Making decisions that may be lawful but are unethical is where the NCO can get into trouble.

"When making an ethical decision, we have to distinguish between statements that are factual, and those that are values-based," Starmer said. "When I ask soldiers what is a factual statement, I usually get the response, *telling the truth*. Although it's wise to base decisions on truth, not all factual statements are based on truth."

"The real truth in an ethical decision comes from balancing the facts of the case, the personalities involved in the case, and the values-based perspective the decision maker brings to the case," Starmer said. "Sharing values is important to soldiers, because it's shared values that shrink the size of the gray areas."

But even though we do have shared values, those values are not all inclusive, and aren't the only values we acquire. One of Starmer's favorite movies, *Top Gun*, teaches the value of believing in your own skills and abilities and acting on those beliefs in the face of peer pressure.

"I don't care who you are or where you come from, today's leaders need to be extremely confident and competent, or they will find someone standing in the doorway ready to take their place," Starmer said. "For me, I have always been goal oriented. I write my goals down so I can see them every day. The day I made private first class, I bought a new uniform and sewed specialist insignia on it. I knew early on that I would be a command sergeant major some day, I just didn't know how long it would take."

One of Starmer's most significant

values-related learning experiences didn't come from an NCO — it came from a civilian instructor she met years ago.

When she was nearing the end of her first enlistment, Starmer set her sights on reclassifying and becoming an Army broadcaster. To become one requires passing a voice audition — one not everyone can pass.

"Bob Runda headed the voice and diction department at the broadcaster school. He took the time to write me a letter in Korea, telling me the things I needed to do to become an Army broadcaster," Starmer explained.

It took, as Starmer related, a lot of hard work, but she passed the audition, passed the course and went on to one day become an instructor in Runda's department.

"He taught me so much about working hard, going after what you want and not quitting, the years I worked with him changed my life," Starmer said.

Quitting could have been easy for any woman who joined the Army in the 1970s. Army magazines still had pin-up girl pictures on their inside covers, and female soldiers weren't always welcome in some units.

"Of course, there will always be some knuckleheads who still have issues with women in the military, but that's their problem," Starmer said. "I do believe the Army Reserve has led the way opening the diversity door to leadership positions. We are a true reflection of society, so I would imagine attitudes change with time. It's our job as NCOs to ensure future leaders reinforce society's and the Army's values through the use of a sound ethical decision-making process."

SFC Tunney is a public affairs NCO in the 70th Reserve Support Command PAO, Seattle, Wash.