

# MORAL COMBAT

For the Army Profession and Ethic is fighting the fight for what's right.

By Angela Simental

**Imagine this scenario: You are in a high-risk combat zone when, unexpectedly, insurgents start firing at your unit. You are caught in the middle of a bullet storm, and your buddy, risking his life, pulls you to safety. He saves your life. Days after the incident, you find out your friend is taking questionable actions – behavior that is affecting the mission and the entire unit. What would you do? Would you tell on the person who saved your life?**

Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan Bevier,  
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary  
Center Public Affairs

This scenario is one of numerous dilemmas that Soldiers often face. The decision whether to report it or not is based on character and ethical standards. But, what is the ethical decision?

Outside the combat zone, Soldiers also face situations everyday that require ethical decision-making. Would you tell on a friend who cheated on an exam or stole from the PX?

"We've ingrained in Soldiers that they should be loyal to their buddies. When their buddies do something wrong, it is very difficult for them because there is that whole conflict of, 'Who am I supposed to be loyal to?'" said Wanda Majors, director of instructional products for the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, housed at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.

The center was "created to evaluate and refine professional military ethic, develop ethical leaders and share understanding of Army culture," said Col. Sean Hannah, Ph.D., director of CAPE.

"The American Soldier is the most respected profession. That is due in large part to our conduct," said Command Sgt.

Maj. Anthony Mahoney, West Point's command sergeant major.

Hannah added that much of what it means to be an Army professional has been implicit.

"Right now, there is not a codified document that tells us what our Army ethics are or what it means to be [in] a profession of arms or what it means to be a professional Soldier," Hannah said. "You read the Soldier's Creed for instance, and it says 'I am an expert, and I am a professional.' It is one of the key stances. But, what does it mean? If I am a young Soldier and I read this and it says 'I am a professional,' where do I go to be explained what it really means? What are the requirements of being a professional? How do we as a profession operate?"

CAPE's publications define the profession of arms as being "a vocation comprised of experts certified in the ethical application of land-combat power." A professional Soldier is defined as "an

expert ... bonded with comrades in a shared identity and culture of sacrifice and service to the nation ... who adheres to the highest ethical standards."

Defining ethics is complex, but in general it refers to doing what is *right* based on standards and values pertaining to, in this case, the military culture.

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. defined military ethics as a system of moral standards and principles that define the Army's commitment to the nation. The principles are described in the Army Values, NCO Creed, Warrior Ethos and Soldier's Creed.

"I think [an ethical] Soldier does what is right because it is in him, not because he was told to do so," said Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Harris, command sergeant major of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point Corps of Cadets, "It is hard to describe what an ethical Soldier is. It is his or her actions that describe it. If he has internalized the Army Values, his actions

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will speak for who he is."

The center, originally known as the Army Center of Excellence for the Professional Military Ethic, was created in 2007 as Casey's initiative.

"He saw some weak signals that we as an Army need to focus on," Hannah said. "As an Army, we need to focus on our ethic, take an analysis and find ways to continue to reinforce it in this time of persistent conflict."

Since October, when Casey addressed the Association of the United States Army Conference in Washington, D.C., and said that the Army needs to examine the impact of 9 years at war on our profession -- the profession of arms, more interest has sparked in learning about ethics and the profession of arms.

To ensure that the mission of CAPE is met, it is vital to have NCOs involved, Hannah said.

"CAPE gives [NCOs] a direction, and we can all have one end state, which

is developing leaders of character across the Army as opposed to doing it individually, as we are doing it today. Your average team leader needs a program that he can follow, become an expert and be confident when teaching ethics and values," Harris said. "Noncommissioned officers train the individual Soldiers. We train them in their values, in their tactical tasks and their technical tasks. Who they are is a direct representation of who their team leader is. The NCO has direct influence over those Soldiers from day one. NCOs are the first face they see in the morning and the last face they see at night. So that is the person who is most involved with teaching values and developing the character of the Soldier."

### Extending its reach

Originally, CAPE was a unit under West Point. In August, the center became a direct reporting unit to the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and began extensive collaboration with the Combined Arms Center, or CAC, at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Under TRADOC, CAPE will broaden the scope of its mission to

include not only teaching about ethics, but also about the profession of arms, reaching the entire Army.

"The decision was made to move the center under TRADOC, institutionalize it and integrate it into the functions of TRADOC, which include leader development, as well as expanding our role, which goes beyond the Army ethics and character," Hannah said.

He added that part of the mission is to develop the concepts and doctrines related to the profession, so the Army has a shared understanding of what it means to be a professional.

The Army is learning the value of talking about ethics, Mahoney said.

"Twenty years ago we didn't talk about ethics," he said. "We are in the longest war we've fought with a volunteer force. There is an opportunity for Soldiers to make the wrong decisions. That is the goodness of this center -- we are now talking about ethics."



Photo by Angela Simental

Lt. Col. Mark Fairbrother, CAPE's chaplain, contemplates the cadets honor code, which is chiseled in stone at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. The honor code reads: "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal or tolerate those who do."

Because of the impacts of war on the Army Profession Casey asked for Armywide emphasis, including an array of events that will highlight CAPE's role, informing the Army about the profession and ethics. The emphasis includes several conferences and an Armywide competition focusing on ethics. The competition, which required submissions of written accounts exemplifying ethics, closed Aug. 15.

"Gen. Casey directed us to launch a major campaign. The Profession of Arms Campaign has three major components: First, is assessing what it means to be a profession and a professional Soldier," Hannah explained. "The second component is dialogue. He wants CAPE to lead a dialogue across the Army based on the results of our assessments. We will use that dialogue and bring it to the senior leadership and make decisions. The third component is to transform different aspects of our profession and our ethics based on the dialogue."

Hannah added that for this campaign to be effective, NCOs need to take ownership of it.

"NCOs are the direct, first-line su-

pervisors of Soldiers. Their actions speak louder than their words," said Mahoney, explaining the importance of NCOs teaching Soldiers about ethics and profession.

"The campaign will provide the senior-leader emphasis that we need on the topic. This is not just a CAPE project; this will be Army-level dialogue," Hannah said.

*"I see CAPE having the ability to reach out to private organizations and set a model for schools, civic groups and the scouts. There, we will see the true value of the center in the future."*

— Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mahoney

In October, CAPE participated in the annual Association of the United States Army convention held in Washington, D.C., where it debuted as a separate program, presenting its own panel and briefings based on the center's research. This month, the Command and General Staff College's ethics symposium, held at Fort Leavenworth Nov. 15-17, will be dedicated to discussing ethics and the profession of arms. In January 2011, the Unified Quest Conference, which will be held in Washington, D.C.,

will discuss the profession of arms.

## Researching and training

The Profession of Arms Campaign will not only serve as a way to open a frank dialogue, but also to continue one of the center's missions – research.

For example, throughout the assessment phase at the beginning of the Profession of Arms Campaign, a series of surveys will be sent to all participating personnel, Hannah said. The data collected will be analyzed by a group of experts to be incorporated in the center's products.

The center relies on scientific behavioral and psychological research to develop its instructional products.

Majors said it is difficult to scientifically study ethics because it is such an intuitive process. It can only be observed.

"We spent the first year looking at what existed as far as character development and moral processing, and we identified some gaps and came up with a strategy for content," she said. "We discovered that you can, in fact, affect someone's moral character; you can improve their ethical behavior."

“CAPE wants to conduct evidence-based practices,” said Pauline Schilpzand, Ph.D., who is part of CAPE’s research team. “We pull from existing theories about human behavior, and we apply it specifically to the military context.”

CAPE’s research covers all areas of the military. Because research and instructional products bring real Soldiers and their stories into play, personalizing the topic of ethics, other Soldiers can identify with them and start a dialogue, Majors explained.

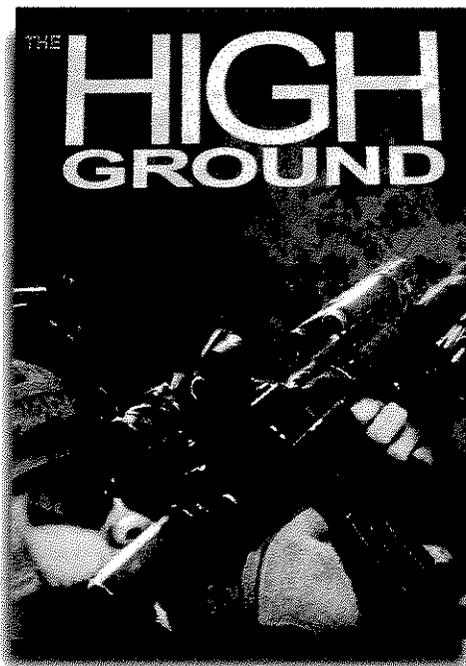
The center recently studied 2,000 Soldiers in Iraq, analyzing ethical leadership in combat. Studying the effects of multiple deployments on ethical decision-making, the research team also tracked a brigade combat team from pre-deployment to redeployment. The final results from both studies are still pending.

“We’re learning quite a bit from these studies,” Hannah said. “One of the most important things is that ethical leadership matters, and we need to reinforce it across the Army. We are learning what it means to be an ethical Soldier. What are those actions and behaviors that certain leaders do that reinforce ethics in their units when they go into combat? We are finding things that are intuitive and simple. For instance, leaders who simply talk about ethics in their operations planning and rehearsals, and talk about ethics in after-action reviews have lower levels of ethical transgressions in their units.”

A vast array of CAPE’s products and research targets NCOs. It is the center’s goal to incorporate them into the NCO Education System.

Topics such as ethical leadership, Soldier character development, ethical decision-making, Army ethic, ethical command climate and the profession of arms will become part of the NCOES.

Majors said CAPE’s instructional materials will be incorporated in every NCOES



*The High Ground* is an interactive movie created by CAPE, where Soldiers can become the lead character, making decisions and seeing the consequences. The video is intended to teach and improve Soldiers’ ethical decision-making.

course by the end of fiscal year 2012.

“Soon everything we learn from the Profession of Arms Campaign will [also] be incorporated into NCOES,” Hannah said. “NCOs can help us to refine our concept so what we teach in the NCOES is meaningful.”

“NCO input is crucial to a commander’s overall professional development and training strategy,” said Bill Kuiper, retired Navy command master chief petty officer (rank equal to an Army command sergeant major), and training specialist for CAPE’s instructional programs and products. “In both their roles as leaders and trainers, NCOs need to be well grounded in the principles that define the Army as a profession of arms and its Soldiers as professionals. These concepts are

the foundation of the moral identity and the professional development essential for Soldiers as they operate in the existing and future environments of persistent conflict, requiring strength of character and enhanced ethical decision-making. They will learn these principles as part of NCOES.”

Virtual Experience Immersive Learning Simulation exercises, for example, were fielded last year for basic training and will become part of the Warrior Leader Course starting in January. VEILS are interactive training videos, which present, in this case, “challenging ethical scenarios encountered before, during and after an Army unit’s deployment to a combat zone,” as stated on CAPE’s website.

“Rather than using a written story, we found that video works better,” Majors said. “We interview real Soldiers and they tell their story.”

CAPE will be working with the Institute for Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development and the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy to incorporate its instructional materials into the NCOES.

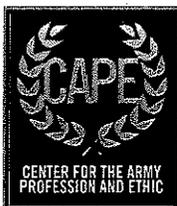
“With our recommended strategies, we can help them figure out how best to put those in the WLC,” Majors said. “The people who designed the course understand the audience, and we understand the learning strategy.”

Before that goal is met, CAPE, along with the Center for Army Lessons Learned at CAC, is creating a handbook for NCOs on how to develop ethical Soldiers. Fifty thousand copies will go out to reach every squad leader and above, Hannah said.

CAPE’s Army Knowledge Online website also includes reading material, case studies and computer-based training modules on ethics, available for anyone with an AKO account.

“I think [next year] we will hear a lot about ethics,” Mahoney said. “I see CAPE having the ability to reach out to private organizations and set a model for schools, civic groups and the scouts. There, we will see the true value of the center in the future.”

– CAPE



**“The Army ethic is the collection of values, beliefs, ideals and principles held by the Army profession and embedded in its culture that are taught to be internalized and practiced by its members to guide ethical conduct of the Army in defense of and service to the nation.”**

For more information and discussions, or to access CAPE’s products visit:  
[acpme.army.mil](mailto:acpme.army.mil) or CAC’s Moral Highland blog at: [usacac.army.mil/cac2/blogwarning.asp](http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/blogwarning.asp)

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