Ethical Conduct in War

The respect for the rule of law forms a basis for the foundation of soldier ethics because it defines the way they conduct their operations. Although soldiers have tremendous firepower at their disposal, soldiers use it judiciously with a high level of precision instead of shooting indiscriminately. Applied ethics training for soldiers is essential today than in the past since there is the need to distinguish social and military professional outlooks on use of violence. The law of war such as the military code of honour justifies violence only against combatants; hence, the collective training on army ethics, which are hugely important.

Soldiers comprehend that the military and the fellow soldiers look forward to them to show high sense of honour beyond what is shown in popular culture. The world of honour in military involves an individual discovering his real identity in roles and turning away from the roles is actually turning away from oneself. Hence, soldiers recognize that he or she is expected to take risks and forgo something in order to achieve the task, shield fellow soldier or defend innocent people. The use of force to decrease risk to fellow soldiers while placing the mission or innocent people at risk has to be considered to be inconsistent with military code of honour as well as the professional ethics. While emphasizing ethical behaviour as a goal, soldiers also value utilitarian basis for sustaining the highest moral standards. Education on values in soldiers can ring hollow unless tracked in a manner that offers perspective and shows relevance. Therefore, showing soldiers their enemy’s propaganda aids in emphasizing the significance of ethical behaviour in
countering misinformation. In military, considerate treatment, addressing grievances and developing trust within the population is one of the essential means for achieving success in military operations. Historical examples of extremes or abuse in pursuing tactical convenience have corrupted the moral nature of military units and destabilized planned objectives (“Moral, Ethical, And Psychological…” 13-16).

Leaders in military learn from history in order to evaluate their activities and putting modern operations within the perspective of previous experiences. Evaluating previous military operation experiences allows leaders to question contemporary missions, evade mistakes committed in the past, identify opportunities and recognize effective techniques. Though, education and indoctrination in professional military ethics as well as tough and realistic training are essential; they are insufficient in preserving moral character in intense emotional and psychological pressures that result from combat (“Moral, Ethical, And Psychological …" 17). Therefore, leaders prepare units to cope with stress that results from continuous operations within counterinsurgency environment, because combat stress usually results in unprofessional and unethical behaviour. Since counterinsurgency operations are more stressful compared to the conventional war, control of stress is a command responsibility even when grieving the loss of fellow soldiers. Military leaders have to be familiar with grief counselling and be able to watch soldier behaviour carefully in order to identify warning signs of stress like disconnection, suspiciousness toward comrades, distractibility and inconsistency (“Moral, Ethical, And Psychological …" 16). Leaders have to look for soldiers who have become “revenge driven” because they can break down discipline of the unit and inflict significant damage to the mission and fellow troopers; therefore, leaders endorse commitment to fellow troopers and mission as the main motivating factors in war.
Certainly following rules of warfare slows down reaction time and forces commanders to discriminate the use of firepower, because the discriminate and precise use of firepower does more good than harm even in the lowest levels. Choosing to be precise in the use of firepower minimizes civilian casualties, which is an effective way of lowering the level of violence against military units; hence, being precise and discriminating not only protects the innocent but also military forces in the long term (McGee 70). Negative effects of following the law on warfare fade when compared to gains of functioning in a morally ethical manner according to the laws of warfare. The laws that govern where bombs can be dropped and the way military conduct their operations indicate the indispensable respect for people rights to live freely. When nations choose to abide by these rules in dangerous circumstances, they show the world that they are willing to make sacrifices to enforce them in their military operations (McGee 71).

In conclusion, proper conduct of military forces usually follows the rules of war since they have profound positive effects in military operations. Following the rules of warfare and instilling the significance of ethical behaviour in soldiers are essential forces in military operations. The actions of armed forces accomplish much in bestowing legitimacy of military presence because the legitimacy is an essential foundation for the success of any military operation.
Works cited
