



THE “NOT IN MY SQUAD” PROGRAM

Making Positive Changes in the Army

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Several professional development courses of training are available on the “Center for the Army Profession and Ethic” (CAPE) Web site. One such program is “Not In My Squad (NIMS),” as prefaced by the following statement on the CAPE site:

The Army doctrine of Mission Command is based on building cohesive teams through mutual trust and shared understanding and purpose. The squad is the foundational team upon which the Army builds its formations. As the Squad Leader, you are responsible for all your team

does or fails to do. You are charged with taking the lead in training your squad and instilling discipline and a “winning spirit” in each of your Soldiers. This is your Duty. Your Soldiers, as a cohesive team, must accomplish the mission in the right way (ethically, effectively, and efficiently), striving for excellence, and persevering through adversity, challenge, and setback. To do so, they require inspiration, motivation, and committed leadership. (CAPE, 2017)

As an Army squad leader the ever-changing pace of the Army mission should be easily adaptable by the squad in mutual trust and cohesion within the squad. This is the primary focus of the “Not In My Squad” program. The program shows the effects of decisions made in virtual train-

ing. Additionally, the program gives junior leaders and Soldiers an insight into the decision-making process at the senior leader level of the Army on disciplinary and morale-breaking issues.

Army Profession

“The Army Profession is a unique vocation of experts certified in the ethical design, generation, support, and application of land power, serving under civilian authority and entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people” as (Department of the Army [DA], 2015a, p. 1-2). The United States Army promotes “commitment to maintaining the Army as a military profession” (DA, 2015b, p. 1-1). One way to ensure that Soldiers continue to improve upon commitment is through professional development. The NIMS initiative is a professional development course

that is committed to upholding higher standards for junior leaders and enlisted Soldiers. The NIMS course systematically breaks down the five characteristics of the Army profession and shows implementation of these characteristics in Army decision-making processes. The five characteristics include: military expertise, honorable service, trust, Esprit de Corps, and stewards of the profession.

Character

Character in the Army profession is vital to earn and sustain trust amongst junior leaders and Soldiers in the squad. The NIMS course provides real-life interactive modules to demonstrate the effects of how different decisions reflect a Soldier's character. Based on the multichoice modules, choices selected reflect the different ways the scenarios outcomes can change the Soldier's character. The perception of character by other Soldiers directly reflects the type of leader he or she is. According to Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) No. 6-22, "Character is essential to successful leadership. It determines who people are, how they act, helps determine right from wrong, and choose what is right" (DA, 2012a, p. 83). Junior leaders who show good character provide a basis for junior Soldiers to emulate and grow into future leaders with strong character.

Empower Junior Leaders

The virtual simulations in NIMS give junior enlisted Soldiers the ability to see how simple decisions can greatly change the outcome of a training exercise. In addition to outcomes of training, NIMS also shows junior enlisted Soldiers what the effect of the disruption of good order and discipline can do to the morale in the unit.

Competent leaders know the best way to create a solid organization is to empower subordinates. Empowering subordinates does not mean omitting checks and only making necessary corrections. Leaders help subordinates in identifying successes and mistakes by ensuring they sort out what happened and why. (DA, 2012b, p 49)

The NIMS modules teaches junior leaders that communication with junior enlisted

Soldiers is vital in accomplishing mission tasks, and it helps soon to be subordinate leaders to grow and develop trust. "If subordinate leaders are to grow and develop trust, it is best to let them learn through experience. Effective leaders allow space for subordinates to experiment within the bounds of intent-based orders and plans" (DA, 2012c, p. 49).

Junior leaders and subordinates need to be given the chance accomplish the mission, this is empowering. "Leaders empower subordinates by training them to do a job and providing them with necessary task strategies; give them the necessary resources, authority, and clear intent; and then step aside to let them accomplish the mission" (DA, 2012d, p. 160). This empowerment entails a great deal of trust but is necessary in order to allow Soldiers to develop, grow, and take responsibility for their actions

Building Trust and Cohesion

Sergeant Major of the Army, Daniel A. Daily says, "Not in My Squad" is a grassroots initiative focused on building mutual trust and cohesion at the squad and team level" (CAPE, 2016). The squad is the foundation of the Army formation. It is imperative that the squad leader build trust and cohesion within the squad to accomplish the mission ethically, effectively, and efficiently. The NIMS workshop educates Soldiers in effective ways to build cohesion and trust in the team. NIMS provides unique situational modules for the Squad Leader. In these modules, Soldiers take the lead in the training to display whether the decisions

they make will accomplish the missions effectively or ineffectively. According to ADRP 6-22:

Leaders shape cohesive teams by setting and maintaining high standards. Positive climates exist where good, consistent performance is the norm. This differs from a climate where perfectionism is the expectation. The team should appreciate a concentrated, honest effort even when the results are incomplete. They should feel that their leader recognizes value in every opportunity as a means to learn and improve. Effective leaders recognize that reasonable setbacks and failures occur whether the team does everything right or not. Leaders should express the importance of being competent and motivated, but understand weaknesses exist. Mistakes create opportunities to learn. as (DA 2012e, p.223)

Ethics, Values, and Virtues Both Past and Present

The Army Values are one of the first lessons a new recruit receives following the classical head shave and cattle truck ride to their barracks. It's this set of moral principles that guide the Soldier, both recruit and senior, to not only accomplishing their missions, but complete it in a virtuous and positive manner. The continuous implementation of these values reinforce a Soldier's trust in his or her leader. Strong conviction to the Army Values, coupled with top-notch technical expertise, are the recipe for a respectable leader that is ready to lead, fight, and win America's wars. The NIMS program aims to reinforce these ideas to spur the



Photo by SFC Robert Douglas



evolution of junior leaders in the right direction. The Army has neither the time nor the room for vices such as disloyalty, disrespect, selfishness, cowardice, or dishonesty. These traits are contrary to Army Values and warrior ethos and degrade mission readiness in a number of ways.

Before changing a culture, we first need to change ourselves. A wise leader builds upon the works and experience of those that came before him or her, while realizing that we as humans do not have all of the answers. From time to time, we need to look into a mirror and recalibrate our intrinsic values. We must ask ourselves why we decided to serve our country and

what that means to us. If the answer does not align with the Army Values, we need to re-evaluate ourselves as a leader. I have done this many times during basic-decision making in day-to-day life.

The United States Army is not the first military organization to adopt a set of codes or virtues. The ancient Roman Empire existed from 753 BC to 27 BC and then from 64 AD to 1453 AD. Romulus was the founder and first king of Rome. Romulus and his contemporaries laid the foundations for all legal, religious, social, and political institutions that ultimately led to their concrete doctrine and virtues. The word “virtue” itself is derived from the Latin term “virtus,” the personification of the deity ‘Virtus,’ and had connotations related to masculinity, worthiness, strength, and civic duty as both a citizen and a Soldier. This was but one of many virtues that Romans in positions of leadership, whether civilian or military, were expected to uphold and pass on through the generations as part of the “Mos Maiorum,” an ancestral tradition that defined what being a Roman meant.

The primary Roman virtues that drove the greatness and effectiveness of their Soldiers were: Auctoritas (Authority), Comitas (humor, courtesy, sociability), Constantia (perseverance and resilience, both physical and mental), Clementia (mercy), Dignitas (dignity), Disciplina (discipline), Firmitas (tenacity), Frugalitas (frugality), Gravitas (gravity or

sense of responsibility and earnestness), Honestas (respectability), Humanitas (cultured and civilized), Industria (industriousness), Iustitia (justice), Pietas (dutifulness that included patriotism, piety to God, and to society as a whole), Prudentia (prudence), Salubritas (wholesomeness), Severitas (sternness, self-control, and stoicism which is tied to Gravititas directly), Veritas (truthfulness), and Virtus (“manliness” or valorous and courageous. ‘Vir’ is Latin for “man”).

It’s glaringly apparent that the values and virtues of the Roman Soldier were not so different from our own. You can also see that many of the words we use in modern English stem from these ancient terms. We have a lot to learn from them about what it means to serve our country, why it is important, and how fragile freedom really is.

Conclusion

The NIMS workshop is an effective tool to train junior leaders and Soldiers to build cohesion and trust. Through using interactive modules, Soldiers learn ways to communicate, build trust, become empowered, and show good character. The way to shape the Army of the future and to produce effective, efficient, and ethical leaders starts at the lowest levels. The NIMS workshop training needs to be implemented across the Army to build a more effective and productive Army.



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