

Accountability in the military



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BUSTER**

What is accountability? The Army definition is: The obligation imposed by law or lawful order or regulation on an officer or other person for keeping accurate record of property, documents, or funds. The person having this obligation may or may not have actual possession of the property, documents, or funds. Accountability is concerned primarily with records, while responsibility is concerned primarily with custody, care, and safekeeping. However, the way I see accountability is the responsibility of keeping track of the equipment or personnel assigned to you.

Accountability is a big thing in the military because it ties in with responsibility and duty. That obviously makes it an important topic, no matter your rank. No matter if you are a private with an M-4, or a Non Commissioned Officer with his squad, you are accountable for whatever is assigned to you. An example of this is morning formation, it is for PT, but it is also to get accountability of all of the soldiers under your command, as well as put out any information that may be needed later in the day such as the days operating procedure or times for formations.

Without morning formation the 0900 work call would be mass chaos as people try to figure out where they are supposed to be to meet up with their platoon. Self accountability is showing up to formation on time with all of my gear and sensitive items on hand. If you were not accountable for your gear something as small as a rhino mount could get lost somewhere between where you came from and the formation. This would result in a massive police call which could possibly last for hours until this piece of gear is found.

Once the equipment is found you will probably get massive amounts of counseling statements asking why you weren't accountable for the sensitive

item you signed for. An article 15 could possibly follow in its wake, which would lead to loss of pay, rank, and extra duty. All of this over a little piece of folding metal that would have taken not even 30 seconds to secure onto your ACH. And if a private complains about the small responsibility of being accountable for a few pieces of gear think how it must be for a Non Commissioned Officer. Every morning we have a formation at 0630 for pt.

However this formation is also used for Non Commissioned Officers to get accountability of their soldiers. This allows the Non Commissioned Officers to know which of their will be in today, which have appointments, and which will be out for various reasons, as well as informing the First Sergeant of this information. This makes sure that no mistakes are made later in the day like a soldier getting yelled at for not going to a detail when the soldier was actually on quarters. A situation which would end with counseling statements and possibly an article 15 all due to a misunderstanding.

Keeping accountability for all of the gear signed off to your squad or platoon is also a large task faced by Privates, Non Commissioned Officers and the Officers who lead the platoon. Keeping accountability of not only people, but equipment helps cut down on waste. Do you have any idea how much it would cost to replace all the equipment and people lost if leaders simply never noticed they were gone and constantly had to replace them? It would bring the amount of money the military would require to operate up by millions, if not billions of dollars.

This kind of increase would tear our military apart from the inside out, imagine how many more soldiers would be getting kicked out, after all the Army is already trying to get rid of people, and our budget is nowhere near

as inflated as the one I just proposed. It would literally be the Army of one. And keeping those soldiers that are still in fighting alive and accounted for is one of the biggest responsibilities placed upon a Non Commissioned Officer. Accountability is not just to keep track of soldiers while in garrison.

Accountability also needs to be taken while on the battlefield. How can you plan for an action if you do not even know where all of your troops are? What happens when you conduct a movement and realize that you just left 5 people behind? And then there is the classic problem of keeping track of soldiers while in combat. One of the United States military's biggest concerns is to never leave a man behind, dead or alive. It is perhaps this knowledge that they will never be left which keeps many troops confident in their job.

How hard would you fight if you knew that your life was expendable and should you go missing, you would be written off and forgotten? Which is why accountability on the battlefield is important. Morale would drop drastically and soldiers would refuse to fight if they knew that their life meant absolutely nothing to the military. However, one shouldn't be accountable for just their gear, but their actions as well. In the military being accountable for your assigned TA-50 is an important topic that repeats itself no matter where you are stationed. However your gear is not the only thing that soldiers need to be accountable for.

We as soldiers also need to be accountable for our actions as well. Sure, you can be a squared away soldier who always has all of his gear on him whenever he reports to formation. That would not help you much, though, if you show up to a formation 10 minutes late. Say I walk up to a Corporal and say " Yo bro, what's going on, bro? " I am probably going to be reprimanded

and held accountable for my actions. I should of been accountable for what I was saying and shown respect to a Non Commissioned Officer, instead I showed disrespect so I would be held accountable for my actions.

Another situation where one would be held accountable for their action is if they started goofing around in formation after the company has been called to attention. We, as soldiers always need to display ourselves as trained professional, whether were currently wearing the uniform or not, and being accountable for your actions is one way to accomplish this. Being accountable for your actions should not just be for when you are at home on our side of the ocean on base. You will need to be accountable for your own actions during a deployment as well.

Responsibility increases when soldiers believe that they have control over their mission performance, performing out of desire to do well instead of just following orders. There have been many studies that have suggested that when the soldier feels that they have personal control over their work performance the end result is that the soldier has a better task performance, better problem solving, a higher persistence in accomplishing the task, more positive emotions and even better psychological and physical health.

Such benefits as this would allow for missions to run much more smoothly as opposed to soldiers just following out their orders. A smoother mission means less casualties, and less casualties is self explanatory. And in an Army where you need to be accountable for every soldier under your command, a mission running that smoothly would be a great benefit to a Non Commissioned Officer. In the situation of what happened in the demolitions

kit we lost accountability for a large amount of the equipment we were assigned to take inventory of.

Somehow we managed to miscount both the M152's and the M11's, having one extra and one short respectively. Instead of just letting Halverson count out the equipment once and saying that it was good we should have re-counted everything one more time and checked all of the boxes just to make sure we had not looked anything over, like we ended up doing. If we had taken the time to take proper accountability of our gear we would not have ended up with a miscounted demolitions kit.

The inventory would have been that much quicker and painless, which would have allowed us more time to review topics we had been learning in our classes on MDI in order to make sure we had retained the knowledge. In the end accountability seems to be a simple term at first, but when you begin to look at it in depth you begin to realize that there is a lot more to it than know where your stuff is.

Accountability is keeping track of all of the equipment signed under your name, while also keeping track of all of the soldiers assigned under your command. It can be a difficult concept at times, especially when the soldiers you are trying to get accountability for are not co-operating with you. It is a difficult concept which writing this essay about it has made me realize how difficult accountability can be, especially for a Non Commissioned Officer. But its part of the job, we do it then drive on.