

Unethical orders and knowing right and wrong philosophy essay



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Growing up our parents try to teach us from right and wrong. Then we start school our teachers teach us the same thing as well. Though it may be different then what our parents taught us it's still the same concept. They all teach us to do what we feel is right physically and morally no matter how much it hurts. That's the same exact way you are taught in the military from the first day of boot camp. No matter what branch of the military you join they all teach you their own core values, and follow the uniform code of military justice. In this paper I will discuss with you the consequences of following military orders that may be unethical whether they are right or wrong.

When a soldier is given an order he must follow it no matter if he sees as unethical. Sometimes soldiers are given orders that they feel is wrong and unethical and decide not to follow it. It is wrong to disobey an order from a superior officer. In any case you will be charged with an article 90 under the uniform code of military justice. Military discipline and effectiveness is built on the foundation of obedience to orders. Recruits are taught to obey, immediately and without question, orders from their superiors, right from day-one of boot camp. Article 90 of the uniform code of military justice states that " any person subject to his chapter who willfully disobeys a lawful command of his superior commissioned officer; shall be punished, if the offense is committed in time of war, by death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct, and if the offense is committed at any other time, by such punishment, other than death, as a court-martial may direct" (UCMJ). So either way you look at if you don't follow the order then you are in trouble, but yet if you follow the order and a bunch of unarmed civilians get

killed then you are responsible because you followed the order that killed them. In a way if you look at it really doesn't matter if you think it's ethical or unethical or not. If your superior officer gives you an order then you have to follow it. In the military you have rules and codes you have to follow, unlike a civilian. If you chose not to follow those rules and codes then you can be punished or discharged at the least depending on the situation. Under the uniform code of military justice articles 90, 91, and 92 a soldier is told to obey all orders. If he does not he can be sentenced to death if it occurs in the time of war. " Uniform Code of Military Justice is a set of laws that establishes a military justice system in the United States. The laws apply to all members of the U. S. armed forces. The code prohibits certain conduct as criminal and provides for a system of courts and judges to try military members accused of violating the laws. It also outlines the procedures to be followed in these cases" (Mueller 2011).

Seems like pretty good motivation to obey any order you're given, right? Nope. These articles require the obedience of **LAWFUL** orders. An order which is unlawful not only does not need to be obeyed, but obeying such an order can result in criminal prosecution of the one who obeys it. Military courts have long held that military members are accountable for their actions even while following orders if the order was illegal. So how does a soldier even consider what is ethical and what is unethical in the military. To me it seems it would all depend on the soldier and his beliefs. What one soldier sees as ethical another may not. All soldiers are accountable for their actions whether they follow the order or not. All orders given to soldiers differ from one person to another. It also depends on the situation on

whether or not I would follow an order that I saw as unethical. If I am given an order as a soldier to fire upon a crowd of women and children and men that are unarmed. You can bet that is one order I will not follow unless I can sense that myself and the other soldiers around me are in danger. I would rather take my chances in a court martial than to fire upon an unarmed crowd of civilians.

Some can argue that soldier was given an unethical order to follow and wonder why he is being court marshaled for following it. Unless you served in the military and know the dangers and the stress that everyone goes through it is hard to understand and argue what is ethical and unethical. You see on the news where an officer is telling a soldier to shoot a man walking up the street cause he saw what he thought was a bomb strapped to the man's chest. When it really he just had his coat stuff with goods from the market. Was it unethical for him to order that soldier to shoot that man. Maybe it was , but if you were that commanding officer and your platoon was under threats every day from suicide bombers. Then you would react differently to if you saw a man walking towards your command post with a stuffed jacket on.

There are more than a few reasons that lawful orders should be obeyed. These orders are given for a variety of reasons, and should be followed whether or not you understand or agree with them. Orders are sometimes given simply to keep soldiers to maintain their military bearing and display a proper image of the United States Armed Forces. Other times they are given to protect the soldier or to protect the soldiers around him/her. No matter what, an order should be carried out without question, because if you <https://assignbuster.com/unethical-orders-and-knowing-right-and-wrong-philosophy-essay/>

question orders that seem less important, you could get someone hurt because you were wasting time ignoring or questioning an order that you thought was unimportant.

A soldier is given a great many orders that fall into the first category I discussed, maintaining military bearing. These orders range from keeping in step and swinging your arms in formation, to not moving while talking on your phone. All of these orders have reasoning behind them that has applications on the battlefield. For instance, if you are keeping in step and swinging your arms in formation, then you are paying attention to the cadence that is being given, so if you get a command by whoever is marching you, you are already paying attention and can react quickly. This can be the difference between life and death in a combat zone. The same thing can be said about talking on the phone while walking around. You need to not have any distractions when you are patrolling an area. If you are not alert, you could get yourself killed by an IED, or worse you could get others killed. So while these orders may not seem to have all that much importance in the here and now, they actually have a great deal of importance in that they train you in how you need to behave while deployed, so they should be followed with just as much care as any other order. Another type of order that is given is an order that is designed directly to protect you or those around you. Every time you are given an order to do guard duty or a cleaning detail, that order is there to protect yourself and others. When you are asked to pull guard duty, you are actively watching for threats to those that you are guarding. If an insurgent were to try to enter your AO when there was no guard, he could do a lot of damage before he was noticed, and

he could kill a lot of people. If you have a guard on post, the same insurgent is likely to be killed or taken into custody with no loss of U. S. Soldiers. When here in training you are practicing the ability to stay alert while on those guard duties. If you were to fall asleep on duty, or not report, then you could be responsible for the deaths of your fellow soldiers. A less obvious threat than insurgents is the bacteria and diseases that you are helping to keep under control every time you follow an order to do a cleaning detail. If these orders are not followed then our fighting force could become crippled by sickness. So you can see even cleaning details are in place to help protect you and your fellow soldiers. In the end the point is, whether or not you understand the reason you are being given an order, or agree with that order, it needs to be followed. Failing to follow orders can cause people to get hurt, or can put you in the position of not having the focus or discipline to stay out of harm's way yourself. Follow orders every time. If soldier follows and order and it come back to haunt him he uses the phrase " I was only following orders". That may seem like a good excuse, but the military does not allow it they never have and never will. One case that was so important was that of Lt. William Calley Jr. In 1971 the court martial of Lt. William L. Calley, Jr., convicted of the premeditated murder of some 22 noncombatant Vietnamese men, women, and children at My Lai 4 in South Vietnam in 1968 Calley's court martial was one of the most controversial criminal trials in American history (Daniel, Karsten). If we do follow an order we are responsible for whatever action is brought against us. Especially if we are soldiers who have been around awhile and know how to determine if an order is unethical or not. It's clear, under military law, that military members can be held accountable for crimes committed under the guise of " obeying <https://assignbuster.com/unethical-orders-and-knowing-right-and-wrong-philosophy-essay/>

orders,” and there is no requirement to obey orders which are unlawful. However, here’s the rub: A military member disobeys such orders at his/her own peril. Ultimately, it’s not whether or not the military member thinks the order is illegal or unlawful, it’s whether military superiors (and courts) think the order was illegal or unlawful. You see it is a matter of whether or not we want to go through with it and face whatever punishment we get. There are more than a few reasons that lawful orders should be obeyed. These orders are given for a variety of reasons, and should be followed whether or not you understand or agree with them. Orders are sometimes given simply to keep soldiers to maintain their military bearing and display a proper image of the United States Armed Forces. Other times they are given to protect the soldier or to protect the soldiers around him/her. No matter what, an order should be carried out without question, because if you question orders that seem less important, you could get someone hurt because you were wasting time ignoring or questioning an order that you thought was unimportant.

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In conclusion we all face ethical decisions every day of our lives and we just don't know it. In the military every decision they make depending on the outcome of it can be seen on national TV. Whether or not it was ethical or <https://assignbuster.com/unethical-orders-and-knowing-right-and-wrong-philosophy-essay/>

unethical we judge the soldier for the decision they make. It is not up to us or the soldier followed the order or if he didn't follow to decide if the order was unethical. Depending on the outcome it is up the military and the general court martial bored to decide that. Just remember do what you feel is right when faced with this dilemma