United States Military Academy

Cadet Honor Code & System

LTC Todd Messitt
Special Assistant to the Commandant
for Honor Matters
Outline

• Honor Code and Purpose
• Organization and Responsibilities
• Honor Investigative Process
• Superintendent’s Options
• Honor Study Group
State of the Code

• The Honor Code is healthy and working … but remains under pressure.

“There are two parts to being honorable, one believing in it, and two living up to it.”

- David Wilkie, 1988 Honor Chairman
Values Degradation in Society

The Army’s Line
Honorable Behavior

Questionable Values

Society’s Line
Integrity

Duty, Honor, Country

Updated as of: 15 Aug 07
Cadet Honor Code

“A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.”

• Purpose:
  – To foster a commitment to honorable living as leaders of character for the Army and the Nation
  – Foundation for inculcating the Seven Army Values

• Developed and administered by the Cadets

• The minimal standards for all Cadets

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Goals of the System

• Learn and practice the essential leader responsibility of establishing a healthy, ethical climate within a unit
• Develop an understanding of the importance of integrity as an essential aspect of leadership
• Develop a strong desire to maintain an honorable lifestyle manifested in the Spirit of the Code
• Achieve the level of commitment to honorable conduct necessary to prepare for greater challenges of integrity throughout a lifetime as an officer in the US Army and in service to the nation

The Spirit of the Code
A cadet is truthful, fair, respectful and responsible.

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The Honor Staff

TF Honor

Honor Officer: LTC Messitt

Honor NCO: SFC Taylor

Commandant

First CPT

Honor Captain
CDT Paul Lin

Executive Officer

Secretary
Asst. Secretary

VC/Investigations
Asst. VC/I

VC/Liaison

VC/Special Projects

VC/Education

VC/Mentorship

VC/Liaison

VC/Special Projects

VC/Info Systems

Regt Honor 4x1

Co. Honor Reps 32x2

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Special Assistant for Honor

Roles/Responsibilities

- Commandant’s Advisor for Honor issues
- Mentor the Cadet Honor Staff
- Assist Cadets with the implementation of the Honor Campaign Plan
- Supervise the Cadet Honor investigation process
- Supervise the administration of the Honor boards
- Supervise the Honor Mentorship Program
The Honor System is a *Cadet run* system

- Conduct honor investigations
- Serve as board members on all honor boards
- Oversee the Honor Mentorship Program
- Four year honor education program
- Formal publications
- Character development conferences
- Advise and assist the Corps of Cadets, Staff and Faculty, the Commandant, and Superintendent
Honor and Academic Department

Teamwork

• Cadet Liaisons in every department
  – Provide education, assistance, information and feedback to instructors

• Acknowledgement Statement Review and Implementation

• Instructor Involvement in Honor Boards
  – Witness
  – Character Witness

• Instructor Involvement in Cadet Honor Development
  – Model and reinforce honorable behavior
    ➢ Classroom, OR duties, sponsorship and everyday interface with cadets
  – Honor Mentorship Program
  – Honor Instruction

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Superintendent’s Options
(Standard Sanction or Discretion)

- Standard sanction for Honor Code violation is separation from USMA
- Over the last 10 years the Corps has averaged per year:
  - 121 investigations  12 cadets separated
  - 65 Honor Boards  17 cadets resigned during process
  - 38 violations  20 suspended separation - Supt’s discretion

- Alternatives to the Standard Sanction = Discretion:
  - Placed in Honor Mentorship Program
  - Suspended Separation
  - Turned back one class year
  - Turned back to December Graduate
  - Allowed to graduate with class

- Routine basis for Supt’s Discretion:
  - Cadet maturity and time under the code
  - Resolve to live honorably
  - Egregiousness of the offense
  - Potential for service as an officer
  - Duress
  - Board Recommendations
  - Committee and Chain of Command Recommendations

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Honor Mentorship Program

- 9-12 month program under mentorship of Army officer, senior NCO or civilian faculty member
- Program includes:
  - keeping a journal
  - writing their own XY case
  - writing a role model emulation
  - conducting honor instruction
  - executing a developmental project
- Cadet has no privileges while enrolled in HMP
- Corps/Club Squad cadets don’t compete
- Superintendent approves program completion
USMA Honor Study Group

- **Purpose:** Conduct an in-depth review of the state of the Honor Code and Honor System at USMA

- **Group Composition:**
  - GEN (Ret) Fred Franks (Chair)
  - Select members of Academy staff from ODean, ODIA, BTD, Chaplain’s Office, OPA, SCPME
  - MG (Ret) John Altenburg - Former Deputy JAG
  - Dr. Len Marrella - author *In Search of Ethics*
  - Current Cadet Honor Captain and Class of 2002 Honor Captain

- **Issues Addressed:**
  - The current Honor climate - Attitude, Trends, and Culture
    - Cadet “legal advice”
    - Alcohol as a defense
    - Plagiarism
  - Pressure on Cadets and the Implications
  - Equal Justice
  - Legal Correctness Balanced with Honor Code Mission
  - Honor Education

- **Recommendations to Superintendent in Nov ‘07**

“It’s important to periodically put the spotlight on our Honor System and check its health. There are no specific reasons to do this right now… it’s just time” .. LTG Hagenbeck

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Questions?

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Honor Investigative Process

Suspected Violation → Approach For Clarification → Company honor rep. refers case to RHR → Investigative Team (IT) Investigation → IT Writes Recommendation → Regimental Honor Rep (RHR) Review → RHR Writes Recommendation

- SJA Reviews For Legal Sufficiency
- SAH Reviews For Completeness
- Pre Referral Hearing Panel Recommends Honor Board
- Vice-Chairperson For Invest (VCI) Reviews Case Recommendation To PRHP
- Commandant Refers To Honor Board
- Honor Investigative Hearing (HIH)/Cadet Advisory Board (CAB)
- Review By SJA SAH Commandant
- Superintendent Recommendation
- SEC Army Reviews Separation Cases

- Case may be dropped at this stage

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Updated as of: 15 Aug 07
Honor Investigative Hearing

- Six voting cadet members (4 of 6 to Find)
- Three honor committee reps in each hearing
- Three cadets from the Corps-at-large in each hearing
- Burden of Proof - *Preponderance of Evidence*

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