



**Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army
Profession - Compelling War College Study
Looking at the Deluge of Requirements, Honestly
Confronting Dishonesty, Making Excuses,
Confronting the Truth**

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This book reproduces an important Army War College study on dishonesty in the Army. While it has been fairly well established that the Army is quick to pass down requirements to individuals and units regardless of their ability to actually comply with the totality of the requirements, there has been very little discussion about how the Army culture has accommodated the deluge of demands on the force. This study found that many Army officers, after repeated exposure to the overwhelming demands and the associated need to put their honor on the line to verify compliance, have become ethically numb. As a result, an officer's signature and word have become tools to maneuver through the Army bureaucracy rather than being symbols of integrity and honesty. Sadly, much of the deception that occurs in the profession of arms is encouraged and sanctioned by the military institution as subordinates are forced to prioritize which requirements will actually be done to standard and which will only be reported as done to standard. As a result, untruthfulness is surprisingly common in the U.S. military even though members of the profession are loath to admit it. To address this problem, the authors point out that the first step toward changing this culture of dishonesty is acknowledging organizational and individual fallibilities. Until a candid exchange begins within the Army that includes recognition of the rampant duplicity, the current culture will not improve. The second recommendation calls for restraint in the propagation of requirements and compliance checks. Policies and directives from every level of headquarters should be analyzed in regard to their impact on the cumulative load on the force. Finally, the authors recommend that leaders at all levels must lead truthfully. At the highest levels, leading truthfully includes convincing uniformed and civilian senior leadership of the need to accept a degree of political risk in reducing requirements. At other levels, leading truthfully may include striving for 100 percent compliance in all areas, but being satisfied when only 85 percent is reported in some. The Army profession rests upon a bedrock of trust. This monograph attempts to bolster that trust by calling attention to the deleterious culture the Army has inadvertently created. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel recently stated that he was "deeply troubled" by the latest spate of ethical scandals across the military. His spokesman, Rear Admiral John Kirby, told a news conference, "I think he's generally concerned that there could be, at least at some level, a breakdown in ethical behavior and in the demonstration of moral courage." He added, "He's concerned about the health of the force and the health of the strong culture of accountability and responsibility that Americans have come to expect from their military." Indeed, troubling indicators point to ethical and moral transgressions occurring across all levels of the military. In the Air Force, for example, nearly half of the country's nuclear missile launch officers were involved with or knew about widespread cheating on an exam testing knowledge of the missile launch systems. In the Navy, 30 senior enlisted instructors responsible for training sailors in the operation of nuclear reactors were suspended after a sailor alerted superiors that he had been offered answers to a written test. In the Army, a recent promotion board looking through the evaluations of senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs) found that raters were recording deceptively taller heights in order to keep any NCO weight gain within Army height/weight standards. Additionally, the constant drumbeat of senior officer misconduct and ethical failings have included violations ranging from lavish personal trips at government expense to hypocritical sexual

transgressions.

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Al Fraire:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their free time with their

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