

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**RAYMOND F. CHANDLER III
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY**

BEFORE THE

**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**

SECOND SESSION, 112TH CONGRESS

**ON HAZING
IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY**

MARCH 22, 2012

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT BY
RAYMOND F. CHANDLER III
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY**

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the invitation to address you on this important issue. My message today is a simple one – hazing has no place in our Army.

I spend about 270 days out of the year traveling to camps, posts and stations to talk to Soldiers and their Families about a wide variety of topics, but my overall theme is the Army Profession. I talk about what it means to be a professional, how Soldiers should conduct themselves and, more importantly, how they should treat each other.

To be a professional, a Soldier must possess the three Cs: competence, commitment and character. The first is easy to spot... competence means you are good at your job. Commitment and character are not so easy. A Soldier who is committed to the Army and has character lives the Army Values at all times, even when no one else is around. Soldiers who lack one of the three Cs are not needed in our Army.

We have a duty as professional Soldiers to maintain the trust and confidence of the American people; not just to fight and win our Nation's wars, but also to maintain high professional and ethical standards. So when a Soldier behaves inappropriately, or worse, commits a crime, the American people expect the Army to hold that Soldier accountable. For 237 years the Army has worked extremely hard, and successfully, to strengthen this bond.

This trust begins to break down when any Soldier or Army Civilian acts in an unprofessional manner and puts another at risk of physical or psychological injury. When a Soldier acts unprofessionally, on or off duty, the entire Army feels the repercussions. It is unfortunate that the unacceptable behavior of a few Soldiers can tarnish the image of the other one million who continuously do a tremendous job defending our country.

As noted above, the bottom line is this: hazing has no place in our Army. The Army defines hazing as any conduct whereby one military member or employee, regardless of service or rank, unnecessarily causes another military member or employee, regardless of service or rank, to suffer or be exposed to an activity that is cruel, abusive, oppressive or harmful. This applies to all Soldiers, regardless of rank or status.

Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any form of initiation “rite of passage” or congratulatory act that involves: physically striking another in order to inflict pain; piercing another’s skin in any manner; forcing or requiring the consumption of excessive amounts of food, alcohol, drugs or other substances; or encouraging another to engage in illegal, harmful, demeaning or dangerous acts. Soliciting or coercing another to participate in any such activity is also considered hazing. Hazing need not involve physical contact among or between military members or employees; it can be verbal or psychological in nature.

We recognize that leaders often organize team-building activities that may include good-natured ribbing. However, it is up to Army leaders to ensure that any activity crossing the line and resulting in an abuse of power or deliberate humiliation is not allowed. Effective leaders must never participate in, allow or condone hazing. We expect every member of the Army – military and civilian – to vigilantly guard against any form of hazing and report any incident of hazing to the chain of command.

Secretary Panetta has directed that each service commander personally review their service policies and ensure strict compliance. The Army Leadership has reinforced the standard found in Army Regulation 600-20 and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Individuals found participating in, allowing or condoning hazing may be subject to disciplinary action which may include court-martial or non-judicial punishment. We must ensure Soldiers know they will be held accountable for their actions should they choose to participate in or condone a hazing incident.

But just as importantly, we must permanently change the mindset of those who think that hazing is an accepted practice. Hazing Soldiers who are new to the unit, of different ethnicities or races, or recently promoted NCOs has no place in our Army. In our Warrior's Ethos, we have a line that says: "I will never leave a fallen comrade." In the NCO Creed, we say, "no one is more professional than I." Our Army Values include honor, integrity and loyalty. In order to be professionals, our Soldiers not only have to recite the values and ethics of our Army, they also have to live them in everything they do, which includes treating others, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, race or time with the unit, with respect and dignity.

The Army will continue to take a strong stance against hazing. Hazing violates our Army Values and will not be tolerated. Leaders will be held accountable for their actions. Every Soldier has a duty to prevent hazing and ensure all are treated with dignity and respect, professional courtesy and fairness. I appreciate your time and welcome any questions you may have.