Hazing 13 JAN 2012

You should be aware of recent allegations of hazing within the ranks of our Armed Forces, and we want to take this opportunity to clearly address these troubling reports. We echo the emphasis that Secretary of Defense Panetta and Chairman Dempsey have placed on this matter. Every Army professional has a personal obligation to prevent hazing and ensure that we treat all of our comrades in arms with dignity and respect.

Hazing is not compatible with Army Values. The very foundation of what we do depends on trust, and trust depends on the treatment of all Soldiers with dignity and respect by fellow Soldiers and leaders. Without this, our profession is placed in jeopardy, our readiness suffers and our mission success is at risk.

Hazing, in any form, has no place in our Army and will not be tolerated. This applies at all levels to all Active, Guard and Reserve Soldiers, Civilians and contractors. This is not new. Hazing has been explicitly prohibited by Army Regulation 600-20 and the Uniform Code of Military Justice for many years. Individuals who participate in, allow or condone hazing may be subject to disciplinary action that may include nonjudicial punishment or court-martial.

We recognize that leaders must enforce standards and exercise strong leadership and that this may include organizing team-building activities. This does not, however, allow for any activity that crosses the line and results in an abuse of power and deliberate humiliation. 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 to report any incident of hazing to the chain of command.

As stated by Secretary Panetta, this has a direct impact on force readiness. At this point in our Nation's history, the stakes are simply too high for us to fail. Our professional values are one of the essential components that make us who we are – the best Army in the world and the Strength of the Nation. Army Strong!

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