

**Responsibility of the Armed Forces for  
Education in Citizenship**

**Walter H. Snelling**

**Capt.,            Inf.**

## Preface

The Armed Forces of America have been charged with a specific responsibility in the field of citizenship training of its personnel. As a consequence, it is the duty of every officer to learn what these responsibilities are, and, of equal importance, to understand why this responsibility exists.

It is apparent, and especially to the soldier, that a basic requisite of military strength is numbers and the willingness of those numbers to make common cause. The old saying, "in numbers there is strength", is only half right. If those numbers do not have the will to fight for a common purpose, those numbers, be they ever so large, will be totally incapable of resisting a determined foe.

In today's world, the truthfulness of this has a special importance for all free men. For these free men are faced with a threat to this freedom in the forces of an enemy who would seize and enslave them whenever the opportunity might present itself.

What circumstances could be considered as propitious for such a move on the part of this enemy, Stalin and Company? Certainly, one circumstance would be a situation in which his opponents were so divided among themselves that they would be incapable of offering a unified resistance to an attack from without.

To take a hypothetical case; let the reader imagine a situation in which the countries of Western Europe and America were so rent by internal dissensions that their armed forces themselves had been rendered useless as effective fighting machines.

Under such circumstances, how long might one suppose it would be before the Soviet armed forces would physically occupy North America? - hardly longer than it would take for the Soviet Union to organize, transport, and logistical support for such a venture, we can be sure.

Certainly, this is only a hypothetical case and is outside the realm of probability of coming to pass. However, it does point up what is possible of transpiring and illustrates the necessity for the human will to support a common cause.

It is the primary purpose of citizenship training to assist in engendering and sustaining this will. This is done in a number of ways: by teaching the citizen what the nature and purposes of his government are, by showing him what his privileges and duties are as a citizen, and, most important, by seeking to

develope within him a love of and pride in his country and its institutions.

In the following pages this writer will present a discussion of what the Armed Forces responsibilities for citizenship training are and how they go about discharging those responsibilities.

Although today we hear much about citizenship training for and of the American soldier, seaman, and airman, and consequently sometimes feel that it is a relatively new innovation in the training of our Armed Forces, in reality such training has been with us since the days of the Revolutionary War. The only difference lies in the comprehensiveness of the program itself.

George Washington, our first Commander-in-Chief, fully realized the necessity for informing the American Revolutionary War soldier about what he fought for and why he fought. Washington wrote numerous articles to his troops about the war and had the Declaration of Independence read to them. This was followed by a discussion in which all joined to talk over the reasons "why we fight".<sup>1</sup> In addition, he employed Thomas Paine, one of freedom's most articulate exponents, to write for the troops. The most outstanding example of this work is to be found in Crisis I, one of what might be called the "Why We Fight" series of the Revolution. Crisis I was written in the field during the gloomy days when it appeared that the Revolution might fail. It was read, at Washington's order, to the ragged Continentals just before they crossed the Delaware and is credited with inspiring them to victory. Its stirring message opens with these immortal words:

"These are the times that try mens souls. The summer soldier and sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman." 2

During the War of 1812, Andrew Jackson sought to give his troops an understanding of the issues of the times. He did this by issuing from time to time his famous "Division Orders" in which were enunciated the issues of the day and an exhortation to the troops to resist the foe in a just cause.<sup>3</sup>

During the Civil War, large numbers of books and pamphlets proclaiming the causes of the war and the issues at stake were circulated throughout the Union Army. In World War I, informational activities aimed at informing the troops were part of "welfare activities" which were handled by civilian organizations.<sup>4</sup>

It was not until World War II that there emerged within the armed forces the immediate forerunner of the programs which today are in effect to carry out

1. Command and General Staff College Advance Sheet #5037/2
2. Philip S. Foner, The Complete Works of Thomas Paine VI, New York, 1945
3. Command and General Staff College Advance Sheet #5037/2
4. Ibid.

citizenship training of the American fighting man. This was the Troop Information and Education program. With the advent of unification, I & E stepped up to Defense Department level. A T I & E Division was established in the Office of the Secretary of Defense with purposes of establishing policy and coordinating the I & E activities of all three Services. <sup>1</sup>

A second instrumentality for teaching citizenship in the armed forces was created in 1948. <sup>2</sup> This was established under the name of the Character Guidance Program and is so known today.

Thus, at the present time, the armed forces have two distinct agencies as a part of their structure whose primary functions are to assist commanders in carrying out their responsibilities in the field of citizenship training. Let us take a look at these agencies and the policies which define and guide their activities.

To begin with, let us first of all listen to the words of Brigadier General C. T. Lanham:

"... since Utopia has not yet arrived, we must support and sustain an Army adequate to the evils of the day. And since such an Army will of necessity embrace great numbers of our young men, we must see that this substantial portion of their lives is not spent in a civic vacuum, in an educational wasteland, in a moral slum. It is clear, therefore, that our obligation transcends the traditional military concept that our sole duty is to provide the Republic with a body of trained fighting men. We must provide these men with a healthy mental, moral, and social climate, with full opportunity for intellectual and civic growth. We must return these young men to their communities not merely as master journeymen in the deadly trade of war but as self-respecting, mature citizens, strengthened by self discipline and fortified in the democratic faith by living and working with men of all creeds, of all origins, of all economic and educational levels. Thus, our broad objective is to produce a better soldier and a better citizen; for the better the man as a citizen, the better he is as a soldier." <sup>3</sup>

To realize this aim, the armed forces utilize three approaches. They concurrently teach the meaning and significance to our society of individual moral and civic responsibility, they provide means for the individual fighting man to be informed about national and international affairs, and they provide opportunities for educational advancement. These three functions are embraced in two

1. Command and General Staff College Advance Sheet 5037/2

2. ST 16-151, The Army Character Guidance Program, (not dated)

3. Lanham, C. T., Brigadier General "The Things We Live By" Army Information Digest, January, 1949, p.4

programs, the Character Guidance Program and the Information and Education Program.

Let us look first at the Character Guidance Program. AR 15-120, dated 30 January, 1950, spells out the purpose of the program and the methods for implementing it so far as the Army is concerned. Paragraph 8 defines the purpose as being,

"To assist commanders in promoting a healthy moral and mental attitude on the part of personnel of the command. Under this program, the Army will endeavor to insure, so far as is possible under military conditions, the wholesome influence of home, family, and community. The program embraces all activities of the soldier. It is designed to encourage the individual to develop responsibility and self-discipline."

In paragraph 13 we see that:

"each commander will insure that all personnel are reached by group instruction and personal interview in basic and unit training on all matters that pertain to growth of character. Programs will contain scheduled periods of instruction on basic precepts of citizenship and morality."

Insofar as the Character Guidance Program is concerned with the teaching of citizenship, morality, and the development of a sense of responsibility, the Chaplain is the Chief Assistant of the Commander in fulfilling this duty. The nature and scope of this aspect of the program are set forth in ST (Standard Text) 16-151, not dated, which has been prepared at the Chaplain School in conformity with Army Department doctrine.

To realize the aim of the program, ST 16-151 sets forth four things which Character Guidance must seek to do:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) develop within the individual an appreciation of the moral fabric of the American way of life.
- (2) develop within the individual an ability to recognize the moral obligations and opportunities of the military profession.
- (3) develop within the individual an understanding of the consequences of his own attitudes and behavior.
- (4) develop within the individual a sense of service and sacrifice in the performance of duty.

How is this program to be implemented? Let us look at page 8, ST 16-151—

"A sense of responsibility can, in the first place, be developed only there where some basic principles of life are

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1. ST 16-151, The Army Character Guidance Program, p.6

understood. A knowledge of principles, however, is not enough. Such tenets must be put to work. A sense of responsibility, therefore, will develop only there where certain principles are both understood and applied to life."

This statement contains the gist of Character Guidance implementation—the exposition of principles and the illustration of how these principles are applied to everyday conduct. In approaching and dealing with this matter of principles, the Character Guidance Program must grapple with the questions of the origin and nature of man, morals, ethics, and the state, and still not violate the American Constitutional right of freedom of religion.

The second means which the armed forces possess for filling their responsibilities for citizenship training is the Information and Education Program. This agency is concerned with such matters as its name implies. It provides the American fighting man with information about current events, both national and international, which are of importance to him as an American citizen; secondly, it affords him opportunities for acquiring or furthering his formal education.

Let us listen to Mr. J. Thomas Schneider, Chairman, Personnel Policy Board, (under which is the Armed Forces Information and Education Division), Office of The Secretary of Defense, speak about the significance of Information and Education:

"In Information and Education activities, two basic concepts are important. One is that the serviceman, whether he be volunteer or draftee, is intitled to an adequate and intelligent explanation of the things he is called upon to do. The overall efficiency of combat forces grows to a considerable extent out of individual attitudes and those attitudes are influenced by the extent to which the individual is informed.

This information should consist of more than the latest communique or a review of day-to-day occurrences. For the individual serviceman it should and must include an understanding of the role of armed forces in a democracy, the relation of the arms and services to each other, and his relationship to the whole. Since the Armed Forces are sometimes called upon to enforce foreign policy, the serviceman should and must know something of what that foreign policy is and how it has come to be what it is...Above all, he should understand and appreciate those shining principles upon and around which our nation has been built...He should understand the nature and extent of the assault that is being made upon these principles...

The other basic concept of importance in an Information and Education Program is that the American people will not willingly, or for long, entrust their sons and daughters to a military organization that allows them to stagnate mentally. For this reason, if for no other, it becomes the Armed Forces' duty to furnish its personnel with reasonable opportunities for educational advancement." 1

1. Schneider, J. Thomas, "The Need for Understanding", Army Information Digest, June, 1951, p.4

So far as the Army is concerned, these responsibilities are set forth in AR 355-5, dated 23 January 1951, entitled Troop Information and Education, General Provision; AR 355-20, 23 January 1951, entitled Troop Information and Education, Troop Information Program; and AR 355-30, 24 April 1951, entitled Troop Information and Education, Army Education Program. From a purely technical consideration of the question responsibility for citizenship training, Troop Information is the only activity of the I & E program which involves any responsibility for this matter. Paragraph 2a, AR 355-5 states:

"The troop information program provides all military personnel with the necessary facts for understanding their responsibilities as soldiers and citizens."

In implementing this, a program of great scope has been instituted. The activities of the information program include: (1) command conferences, (2) oversea Army radio networks, (3) Unit and installation newspapers and news periodicals, (4) troop information displays and presentations, and (5) training of information personnel to include unit conference leaders. These activities must, of course, have sources of information. These are provided by the following media: (1) Armed Forces Talks prepared by the Armed Forces Information and Education Division, (2) Army Troop Information Discussion Topics issued by the Department of the Army, (3) Programs provided by the Armed Forces Radio Service, (4) handouts provided by the Armed Forces Press Service and, (5) a large number of miscellaneous items such as films, pocket guides to foreign countries, maps, posters, etc.

In regard to the educational feature of I & E, although the Armed Forces do not consider, so far as this writer has been able to ascertain, it as a direct part of their citizenship training activities, it can certainly be viewed as a vital supplement to it. This is so in that the serviceman who avails himself of the opportunities provided by the Armed Forces for self-education cannot help but become, in some measure, a better citizen.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion we see that the Armed Forces have a number of well-defined responsibilities for citizenship training of the serviceman. In the first place, they must seek to develop within him a sense of moral responsibility, a virtue which the citizenry of any country must possess if that country is to long prosper

and be strong. To attain this goal, four things are striven for:

(1) An appreciation of the moral fabric of the American way of life.

(2) A recognition of the moral obligation and opportunities of the military profession.

(3) An understanding of the consequences of the individual's behavior.

(4) A sense of service and sacrifice in the performance of duty.

Secondly and lastly, the armed forces must provide the individual serviceman with an understanding of the immediate issues which, both national and international, create the need for his services in the armed forces.

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