

FORUM & FEATURES



Values and Discipline

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Of all the thousands of things that come under the heading of "Leadership," what is it that's most important? The answer is simple: the soldiers' values. This is true because soldiers' values build discipline, and there cannot be such a thing as an Army without discipline. Unfortunately, though, there are no step-by-step instructions on how you can promote values.

But, for starters, go find a handful of unit crests and read the words on them. What those mottos say is what those different units want to be, what they aspire to, how they want to be known, what they want to be known for, what they want their reputation to be based on, and what people can expect of them. Those words tell you what's important in those units, and that's all soldiers' values are — a few words that describe what's important in an outfit.

If you think back to one of the best units you've ever been in, you'll probably find that you can recall the words of the unit's motto. And if you think a little more, you'll remember that there were times when those words gave you some guidance about what you, as a member of the outfit, should do. The words helped you make decisions, and helped you fig-

ure out what was right. Values still lead leaders to do the right things. And they lead soldiers to do the right things.

Any unit or organization must have values — a few words that say what's important for that outfit and that lead leaders to make the right decisions and to do the right things on their own.

FOUR WORDS

Our Army's purpose is to fight and win the land battle. That means our Army's purpose gets accomplished at one specific place — on the battlefield. And that means that our Army's values must serve some function when the unit fights. Many experienced combat leaders feel there are about four Army values that do this. Only four words, but they represent what we want our Army to be, and they describe what our nation expects of our Army. The four words are candor, commitment, courage, and competence. Each one affects the others. They are what you must build into the man called a soldier.

Candor is not a strong word, but it means openness plus honesty plus simplicity. On the battlefield, it is the

prime rule that governs communications among men. It operates to ensure the best possible transfer of meaning among people. The stakes are too high, and time is too short to experiment with anything but the essence and the truth. Men in battle can't be concerned with little white lies, and private secrets, and little games. The communication of facts, and of feelings as well, must be clean, simple, whole, accurate.

The candor of the battlefield serves to develop and support the trust upon which men's commitment to each other is built. The candor of the battlefield is why buddy groups form there so quickly and permanently. The battlefield has to be the most honest place in the world, because lies told there are punished not with gossip but with action.

Battlefield *commitment* is given mainly to men and groups of men, far more than to things. For the soldier, it is commitment first to his buddy, then close after that, commitment to his squad or his crew. There may be some commitment to larger units and a little to the nation, but not near as much as to the buddy and the squad.

This value helps provide security, which comes from mutual trust. It also serves as the central foundation

for teamwork and coordination. Fire and maneuver and combined arms teamwork — the underpinnings of the whole way we fight — are functions of the strength of commitment to men and groups of men, commitment to each other, and to the "US" in U.S. Army.

A leader's commitment to his men focuses downward, to the troops. In some strange but somehow essential way, the strength of this downward commitment often decreases as the rank of the leader increases. In a way, as rank increases, the commitment to men begins to change into a commitment to purpose or mission.

Courage means taking a risk, even though the choice not to do so may be open. On the battlefield, the risk is a total-loss risk, and yet, for various reasons, the soldier himself decides that the total-loss risk may be his own best choice. This risk-taking is the ultimate definition of soldier. That's why some people say that to be a soldier is "the noblest act of mankind."

Courage, in individuals, turns the whole action on. An action cannot start without courage being shown by some individuals. That's what battle leaders do, and what the green tab is supposed to mean, and why setting the example is always so important. Further, a battlefield action cannot

continue to its conclusion unless courage continues to be shown, not just by the leader but by all involved. In battle, courage grows from an individual trait into a unit process. There is something contagious about courage, and it spreads most rapidly in cohesive units.

Competence is the oldest value on the battlefield. Even ten thousand years ago competence determined which side won.

Competence is also the central value, since the other three are linked to it. On the battlefield, candor is important only to ensure the accurate transfer of meaning about the changing status of competence. Competence is the basis for skill and for confidence in one's self, which is where courage comes from. Competence is also the basis for confidence in others, which establishes commitment, since the patterns and the strength of trust and mutual support are formed on the basis of where and in what degree competence lies.

On the battlefield, it is competence that establishes status, and so the patterns of strong informal leadership that actually control the action may or may not correspond to the formal pattern or the actual chain of command. This, of course, depends on the competence of each of the members of the formal chain.

On the battlefield, a soldier's subordinates, superiors, and buddies value competence more than any other attribute, except courage.

And that's what those four Army values do on the battlefield. How can they be used in developing leaders? Well, think a moment about the traits of a leader. Those four words summarize these traits. Then think about the principles of leadership. Those four words also summarize these principles. Since this is so, and since you're a leader, and since you know the best way to lead is to set the example, then develop your subordinate leaders by showing them what those values look like when a leader leads — when *you* lead.

If they do like you do then every soldier in the unit will begin to understand what's important. And the more that happens, the greater the chance that every soldier will do the right thing on his own. And isn't that what discipline means?

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Prepared to Fight

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOSEPH J. ANGSTEN, JR.

It is generally agreed that the extended battlefield of the future will require infantrymen who are mentally and physically prepared to fight continuously against a determined foe. The stamina and concentration of our

front line troops, therefore, will be critical to their success in battle.

Accordingly, a physical training program for our soldiers who are expected to confront a major enemy force in the initial battle of the next

war must be designed to increase their confidence in themselves and in their buddies.

This does not mean that our soldiers should spend four to six hours a day doing physical training