

FORUM & FEATURES



The Difference Pride Makes

CAPTAIN JAMES W. TOMPKINS, JR.

For some time now, I, like all other Army leaders, have been exposed to carefully prepared classes, seminars, field manuals, articles, historical examples, and personal opinions on the role of good leadership in the development of great military units. After some observations of my own, I have concluded that high on the list of the elements that make up good leadership should be individual and collective pride. Carefully developed and sustained, a soldier's pride in himself, his equipment, and his unit can bring great benefits in efficiency and it can reduce the need for prodding, counseling, or supervising soldiers in their routine and special tasks.

Even in my limited experience, I have had occasion to notice the difference pride makes. When I was in Korea, for example, the 2d Infantry Division conducted its annual Indian Olympics. The effort of organizing and conducting this competition often seemed an unwelcome chore to junior leaders who felt they already had too much to do. Nevertheless, I found that the increased proficiency of the Division's units during their later field training exercises and

ARTEPs made running the competition well worth the effort. This increased proficiency was demonstrated not only by the mortar crew that won the Olympic title but by all the other mortar crews, which were convinced that they were just as good as the crew that won.

IMPROVEMENT

This improvement showed even in events that did not measure MOS skills, when, for example, the participants had individually or collectively taken pride in their accomplishments on the playing field and had extended this pride into their everyday jobs.

More recently, with the 24th Infantry Division, I observed the outstanding performance of some of the Division's soldiers during the exercise called Bright Star 82 in Egypt. The soldiers who took part maneuvered so expertly in the desert and carried out their missions with such precision that they gave the impression they had spent all their training time in the sands of the Sahara rather than in the pine woods of Georgia. They took excellent care of themselves and their

equipment, there were no serious accidents or injuries throughout the aggressive exercise, and their base camp was always immaculate. In short, they showed a tremendous sense of pride in what they were doing.

This success was not totally because of their pride, of course. A great deal of hard training and sound planning was also involved. But the sense of pride that had been instilled in the soldiers earlier did provide a catalyst for the successful execution of the exercise.

This pride-building had been carefully and vigorously conducted back at Fort Stewart. From the beginning of the planning stage, the entire chain of command had emphasized to the soldiers that they would have the world's eyes upon them — that they would be representing their nation, their army, and their unit to many people who were unfamiliar with our forces.

The brigade commander had insisted throughout the operation on the highest standards of equipment and personal maintenance. The brigade sergeant-major had seized upon the theme song "We Are Fami-

ly" to form the combat, combat support, and combat service support units into a single proud mass with a common slogan.

The soldiers had painted their equipment in a desert camouflage pattern and, during an inspection on the Division's parade field, had displayed their newly issued desert fatigues to the public for the first time.

Any pride-building process such as this must be carefully planned, created, and sustained. For it to work, the subordinate leaders must understand the plans, too — and the difference pride makes. If they do not understand why a given task is important, a good idea can quickly turn into eyewash for them, especially when added to all the extra efforts they have to put into such a program.

If they are asked to work hard, for example, on a task that leads only to a good appearance, without any im-

provement in function, they are likely to see it as eyewash. But when they are helped to see that if their vehicles, quarters, and soldiers look good, they usually also function well, they are more likely to put their best efforts into the program.

A last-minute effort to put a new coat of paint on a vehicle to impress a visitor may be clearly seen as unnecessary. Likewise, relying totally on a last-minute locker room pitch to stir the troops into a fury before an important training event or inspection will do little to improve performance. But if a unit's leaders have thought through a plan and have started far enough in advance, such an important event can be used as the starting point in pride building. Then, as the unit reaches higher levels of performance, the leaders should keep on insisting that these levels really constitute the unit's day-to-day standards. Thus, maintaining high standards of

performance and appearance day in and day out is a healthy means of building pride, and it will be perceived as such by the soldiers.

Many units in the Army are now benefiting from a healthy sense of pride, and many historical examples also attest to the effect of pride on a unit's effectiveness. Through education, careful planning, vigorous execution and, above all, sustainment of standards, more units can see for themselves the difference pride makes.



CAPTAIN JAMES W. TOMPKINS, JR., recently completed an assignment with the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Stewart and is now attending the CAS³ course at Fort Leavenworth. A graduate of The Citadel, he formerly served with the 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry in Korea and with the 5th Training Brigade at Fort Dix.

Robotic Infantrymen

JOHN FLADOS

The robots are coming! The time is not far off when robotic infantrymen will play important roles on the battlefield in support of their human counterparts. So it is important for today's human infantrymen to know something about what is now taking place in the field of robotic technology and what is expected from that technology in the future.

Soldiers already have a number of thinking machines to help them carry out their missions. One obvious example is the hand-held calculator that fire direction center operators use to

process data quickly. Another example is the XM-734 multi-option fuze, which has replaced more than a dozen other fuzes previously used with 81mm mortar rounds. Similar technical advances continue to allow the Army to upgrade its present weapon systems and to make new weapon systems possible.

Robotic vehicles, too, are already being used in several countries in tactical situations. Canada uses its Remote Mobile Investigation (RMI) unit in bomb disposal and hostage situations. In Northern Ireland, the

British Army has been using a robotic vehicle it calls the Wheelbarrow, and the United States Navy is developing a similar vehicle.

Still newer machines that are about ready to make their appearance in the field have a number of very positive attributes. Their hydraulically- or electronically-controlled limbs are stronger than human limbs when performing certain tasks. Advanced microphones give them superior hearing, both focused and unfocused. Image processing lets these robots identify and report anything that moves