

INFANTRY LETTERS



ON LEADERSHIP

Lieutenant Colonel Henry G. Gole, in "A Personal Reflection on Leadership" (INFANTRY, September-October 1983, p. 12), states that he has "some strong feelings about [his] Army." He then proceeds to describe an Army he may *think* is his army, but it is not the Army *I* know.

He claims we have a "plastic Army ... mesmerized by appearance, a white rocks and zero defects philosophy that leads to dishonesty and, ... inexorably, to false 'body counts.'" He describes a "system that ensures dilettantism" and "produces generals ... expert in [no single] issue." He excoriates an officer corps that pursues "a much-criticized but nevertheless ever-present careerism."

"We talk about the trust and confidence," he says, "but have forgotten the meanings of the words." After more of the same, he concludes his introduction to his topic by alleging that "We have lost the human dimension ... but ... we can certainly restore the human dimension to the way we lead men."

Colonel Gole does not know the Army of which he writes — the Army in the field today. He has drawn on his memory to describe an Army of ten years ago, before he embarked on a series of assignments as an attache, an instructor, and a research analyst. While he was contributing in those fields, our Army was progressing out of that era.

He describes an Army those of us serving in the field do not recognize — because the Army leadership, from top to bottom, has long since taken action to successfully orient itself toward enlightened leadership and the human dimension. It is ironic that the restoration of the human dimen-

sion in leadership that Colonel Gole seeks has been accomplished, for the most part, by the very people he criticizes — and that he missed the process.

I regret his failure to apply to his thesis even the rudimentary test of proof he must have been taught in his long and distinguished academic career, and I resent his arrogance (he suggests the possibility of same, in another context, in his closing paragraph) in castigating the commissioned and noncommissioned officer corps with which he has lost touch.

THAYER CUMINGS
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INFORMATIVE

First, I would like to commend you for an especially informative and interesting issue (September-October 1983). One of the more interesting articles in that issue is the one by Lieutenant Colonel Gole, "A Personal Reflection on Leadership."

In view of my own long-nurtured interest in leadership, I found Colonel Gole's thoughts worthy of examination. I believe I agree with his basic concern, and with his disgust for cant and posturing. I most certainly have great contempt for the likes of a Skinner or a Freud. I also have profited from reading Machiavelli, who has gotten a bad rap from those who have only a superficial understanding of his observations.

Sad but true, we tend to ignore the fundamentals of leadership, which have been known for centuries, suffering the delusion that there must be a better "formula," something of great technical sophistication that we can simply plug into and get the answer in

seconds. In this context current management approaches suffer from the same affliction that befalls our "great" economists whose complex equations seem always to produce the wrong results. Yet, with each crashing failure, these economists are more widely acclaimed and revered than before. They, too, have cast aside the human dimension.

But I'm not sure I completely follow Colonel Gole's comments about the (unquestioned?) virtues of the humanities. (Perhaps the editor deleted some of his explanatory text, such as in the paragraph about Alexander Pope.) I would like to know more about the "great humanists" who have garnered Colonel Gole's admiration. It seems to me, for example, that Rousseau was a humanist, and I am really hard pressed to see much that was admirable about his behavior or his ideas. Simply put, Colonel Gole should get more specific.

GEORGE G. EDDY
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PROVOCATIVE

I have just read "A Personal Reflection on Leadership," by Lieutenant Colonel Gole. I agree with some of the views expressed in this provocative essay, but I am troubled by several of his assertions.

He is, of course, entitled to his own opinions about the state of *our* Army (not just his). However, he seems to be describing general tendencies of the Army of a decade ago, with little or no regard for the real progress the Army has made in recent years. For example, as an Infantry battalion commander in Hawaii in the late 1970s, I never once felt pressure from

any of my superiors to choose appearance over substance. To the contrary, I sensed from each a genuine concern for mission accomplishment and for the welfare of the soldiers we were privileged to lead. Moreover, I enjoyed the spirit of camaraderie and healthy competition that existed among the battalion and brigade commanders with whom I served. With rare exception, these men were true professionals in the finest sense of the term. The occasional dilettante and careerist fooled no one, least of all his peers and followers.

Colonel Gole's criticism of the Army personnel system ignores the genuine reforms that have been initiated in the past decade, such as the centralized command selection system and extended tours for commanders, both of which were designed to improve the Army in the areas he so maligns. As for "trust and confidence" and the assertion that "we have forgotten the meanings of the words," perhaps he should speak only for himself. Most soldiers I know are eminently worthy of trust and confidence; I feel fortunate to be among them.

In his article, Colonel Gole characterizes the Army School System as "superficial." Compared to what? As a recent (1982) graduate of the U.S. Army War College and a current member of the Adjunct Faculty of the Air War College, I have found the atmosphere at both institutions clearly conducive to "thinking complex problems through." Moreover, I find that most of my colleagues welcome the opportunity to pause and reflect on their profession, warts and all. Parenthetically, I would note that Colonel Gole has served the past six years in the military academic environment he finds so intellectually stifling. (I have to wonder why he even accepted a diploma from the Army War College.)

He is also unhappy with the so-called "military-congressional-industrial complex" and, indeed, with our political system, which according to him "virtually guarantees we will be led by amateurs for the first year or

two of each new administration." The latter assertion reflects, in my judgment, an elitist view that is, at best, unseemly for a military professional in a democratic society to espouse.

Colonel Gole is surely right on one point. His comments do, indeed, suggest arrogance. Unfortunately, he is long on criticism and short on suggestions for improving the system he finds so repugnant.

None of what I have said is intended to suggest that our Army is perfect or above criticism. Clearly it is neither. Like most institutions in our society, it is as good or as bad as the people in it. We can only hope that we are better than Colonel Gole's "humanist" views portray us to be.

THOMAS B. VAUGHN
COL, Infantry
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PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE

Reading Lieutenant Colonel Gole's excellent article on leadership, I was struck by his comment on "old soldiers who yearn for something called 'good old-fashioned leadership' but who cannot seem to define it."

I guess he's right on that. But in my some sixty years of closely observing good teachers (some of them even college and university professors) and good military leaders whom I have had occasion to observe (especially General Charles P. Summerall while I was a cadet at The Citadel between 1934 and 1937, and General George S. Patton, Jr., while I was the Ultra intelligence officer at Third Army Headquarters, 1944-45), I find that both good leadership and good teaching boil down to following *exactly* and *in great detail* just two principles: precept and example.

By *precept* I mean laying down rules, regulations, and sensible orders and seeing to it that they are carried out exactly at all times and at all places without exception. By *example* I mean setting a good example in all things — "in word, in conduct, in

charity, in faith, in chastity," to quote from St. Paul's advice to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:12).

Of course, for the military leader there are a few other items in which a good leader must set an example; in the words of General Summerall "good influences can only come from above." (Unfortunately, we are living in an age and a society in which most influences are coming from below, and therefore, are uniformly bad.) We often see military leaders (and teachers) who are perfect in one or the other, precept or example, but we seldom see leaders who are perfect in both.

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ON MACHINATO BLUFF

I thoroughly enjoyed reading "Deception on the Shuri Line" (INFANTRY, July-August 1983, page 14), primarily because I read it while sitting on the actual spot the battle was fought over. As I figure it, the Japanese company that was surprised was sitting about where my living room now stands.

I thought you might enjoy knowing that the Machinato Bluff is now the site of All Souls' Episcopal Church, named to commemorate all those who fell in the Battle of Okinawa. The bluff still gives a commanding view, although the view on the land side is now wall-to-wall city. The landmarks in your story, however, are all still visible, and it made very interesting reading as I was able to view the whole area from the Bluff.

Many thanks.

(The Reverend)
JOHN K. DEMPSEY
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LAYING MORTARS

I am writing in response to Major Mark S. Flusche's article, "Deflec-

tion Scale Board" (INFANTRY, January-February 1983, page 40) and the letter from the Infantry School's Mortar Committee (July-August 1983, page 49).

Major Flusche's idea is simply a firing chart that can be jury-rigged more cheaply and quickly than the regular issue item. A much simpler solution is available, however — using the firing chart in lieu of this homemade device. Hipshoots are routinely conducted in artillery units in the following manner (modified for mortars):

Determine an assumed grid for the hasty firing point — hopefully near the true grid. Choose any intersection on the chart and put the plotting pin there. Then determine a range and an initial azimuth to the target, again using the trusty 1:50,000 map.

Use any grid line that is convenient as the initial azimuth line and inherently as the initial deflection, which is, of course, the base deflection. With the range fan down this line, mark off the chart deflection indices using the range-deflection protractor (RDP), and you are ready to go.

Use the firing tables to get the starting data. Now mark off the announced range using the selected grid line and the RDP, stick a plotting pin there, and carefully place a target grid

in that spot. Orient it as follows: The azimuth should be on the selected grid line. Mark the north arrow, and now you will be able to plot off any observer's correction as soon as you turn the wheel to align the observer direction with the north-arrow mark.

In less than 10 seconds from the decision to hipshoot, you should have your observed firing chart ready to go, and within 15 seconds of the announcement of the initial azimuth and range, you should be ready to accept corrections to the first round and have it already fired. This allows computations accurate to 2 mils in deflection and 15 meters in range. Try that on an M16 plotting board! (How to transfer this to a surveyed chart is described in laborious detail in FM 6-40 and in the mortar gunnery manual.)

From my own experience in Hawaii and Panama, it seems that the M16 board is exactly what it was designed to be — a primitive but portable aid to computing fires. But in extreme heat or cold, the plastic deteriorates, usually around the pivot; under field conditions, the pivots themselves prove fragile; and the small squares and the need to align several items at once amid a confusing mass of other lines in different directions naturally makes errors more likely.

(In Panama, the 193d Infantry Brigade as a whole converted to the primary use of the firing chart in 1977, with the M16 retained as a backup, mostly in places where a vehicle could not go.)

One remedy is the so-called Graphic Firing Fan, which is merely a work-order (or even a do-it-yourself) modification to the RDP, which is readily available. (The Infantry School will have to provide the stock number to those who are interested, since I don't have it on record.) All the other materials — plywood, grid paper, and so on — are readily available through unit S-4s.

Almost four years ago, I wrote an article suggesting a number of improvements, doctrinally-tested by the artillery, that might have made mortar fires faster and more accurate ("Mortar Proficiency," INFANTRY, March-April 1980, page 41). The Mortar Committee responded then that these suggestions were too complicated for an infantry unit to handle, but I reject that attitude. There is no reason why a mortarman cannot be at least as proficient as an artilleryman.

Major Flusche's idea was clearly recognizable as a hasty firing chart. A more proper response to it would have been to point out that firing

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charts are in fact available to mortar units and that the suggested technique could be adapted in the manner I have described.

Mortarmen everywhere need to join in a collective effort to use these simplified methods of laying mortars — before some defense analyst from Ivorytower University eliminates the rest of them from the TO&Es.

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DRAGON TRAINING TIPS

The M47 Dragon has been the Army's medium antiarmor weapon (MAW) for the past 10 years. Throughout that period, considerable controversy has persisted regarding the ability of the Dragon gunner to hit an enemy tank with a live missile.

The reasons for this controversy are legitimate: Many qualified gunners miss the target during their first live-fire engagement, and the gunner's performances on our current Dragon training devices do not correlate with their live-fire performances as they should. Yet, with the

Dragon at least halfway through its life cycle as the MAW, it would not be cost effective to invest in new training devices now. Instead, trainers must use more ingenuity and resourcefulness in their Dragon training programs to make training as realistic and productive as possible, while instilling in the gunners confidence in their weapon system.

Here are some tips trainers can use:

- Coach the gunner into a tight interface with his weapon during all engagements (but limit him to no more than 20 shots a day). Without this tight interface, during live-fire the launch effects shock the gunner and cause him to move abruptly and lose control of the missile.

- Have the gunners track tactical vehicles at ranges of 400 to 1,000 meters with MILES and TVT equipment for training devices. Smoke, small arms fire, and artillery simulators can be added to train the gunners to ignore distractions.

- Reward good performances (select the best gunners for live-fire training, for example).

- Conduct training on tracking skills every month; these skills deteriorate rapidly.

Certainly, at some time in the future we should have a replacement

for the Dragon and one that does not have its drawbacks. Meanwhile, though, the Dragon can do the job if we make the most of our Dragon training with the devices we have.

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VIETNAM BOOK

I am in the first stages of developing a book on Operation LAM SON 719/DEWEY CANYON II, the U.S./South Vietnamese operation in 1971. I would greatly appreciate it if any readers who were connected with this operation would contact me as soon as possible so that we can get together for an interview.

Needless to say, the more people I speak with the better, regardless of their positions during the operation. My address is 220 Kingsville Court, Webster Groves, MO 63119; telephone (314) 961-7577.

KEITH WILLIAM NOLAN

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