

PROFESSIONAL NOTES



Character and Leadership

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George Washington, this country's first great military leader and our first president, once said: "War must be carried on systematically, and to do it you must have men of character activated by principles of honor."

History has shown us that in any fundamental clash between great nations, when their very existence is at stake, the final issue is usually determined by the character of their leaders and not by intellectual factors.

The word "character" comes from a Greek word that means "engraving." When it is applied to a leader, it designates that leader's moral worth or value; it results from a four-dimensional complex development process that includes behavioral tendencies (personality), values, personal relationships, and experiences.

Understanding this complex character development is important for today's military leader because that knowledge will enable him not only to develop his own character but also to guide the character development of his subordinates. This process is best illustrated when it is applied to a prominent military figure. And what better figure can we use as we near the bicentennial of our Constitution than George Washington? His total character certainly provides us a worthy example.

George's father, Augustine, took pains to teach him to be unselfish, imbuing him with a spirit of justice and inspiring him

with a love of truth. His father also taught him to know and to worship God.

George was Augustine's third son and first child by his second wife, Mary Ball Washington. Augustine provided for his family by strip-mining Virginia wilderness for iron ore that he then shipped to England. Although he died when George was only 11, he left a legacy of Judeo-Christian values, a strong work ethic, and an inheritance (Ferry Farm).

Mary Ball Washington was an imperious woman, of strong will, who ruled her family alone. She was endowed with plain, direct good sense, and was given to making prompt decisions. She was dignified, reserved, and sober-minded. The daughter of an almost illiterate girl of only fair English blood, she had been orphaned early in life and subsequently raised by a guardian. She had met the much older Augustine at the local vestry (church).

Mary loved her five children and wished passionately to possess their emotions. Her powerful maternal affection reduced all the children to obedience with one exception—George. Interestingly, he was thought to be her favorite; perhaps it was because he best reflected her own fiery temperament.

During George's early years at Ferry Farm, Mary made a practice of reading to the children from Sir Matthew Hale's *Contemplations*. These admirable religious and moral maxims were tenets

for both outward action and self-government. They apparently sank deep into Washington's mind and influenced his blossoming character.

Mary never encouraged George's military pursuits. She especially resented his participation in the French and Indian War. Later, even during the dark days of Morristown and Valley Forge, she constantly complained in public about his failure to pay her sufficient attention.

Mary had little enduring influence on George's life. His character was much more influenced by his association with his half-brother Lawrence (Augustine's eldest son) and the Fairfaxes of Belvoir.

Lawrence's return from school in England in 1738, and George's first meeting with him, was the first significant emotional event in George's life. Lawrence's participation in an amphibious operation against Cartagena in the West Indies in 1741 made him all the more a hero in George's eyes. The manly and cultured elder Washington provided an excellent role model for George.

In July 1743 Lawrence married Ann, the daughter of Lord William Fairfax. They settled on Lawrence's estate on the Potomac River, which he re-named in honor of his wartime commander, Admiral Edward Vernon.

In 1747, at the age of 14, George left Mary's control to live under their guardianship. He subsequently spent much of his time with his brother and the

latter's circle of friends, particularly the prominent Fairfaxes. Lawrence's military experience and spirit began to influence George's interest in the martial arts, and George's amusements and acquaintances soon took a military turn.

At Mount Vernon, Lawrence frequently discussed the amphibious operation with his military comrades and "the old gentleman," Colonel William Fairfax, a former British regular. Their "war stories" made a considerable impression on George, so much so that at school his playtime was consumed with drilling and parading willing classmates.

George's early education was guided by at least three "educators" and two military mentors. His first exposure to a formal educational setting probably began when he was six. He reportedly attended the "old fields school" kept by one of Augustine's tenants named Hobby.

When George lived at Ferry Farm he attended the Reverend James Marye's school in Fredericksburg. It was there that he laboriously copied and studied the famous rules of civility—a poor substitute for a course in good manners. At best, this was a meager education.

When he resided with brother Lawrence he attended a "superior school" run by a Mr. Williams. It was here that he learned business skills and perfected his knowledge of mathematics, which led to his surveying competence.

Lawrence's war comrades, Adjutant Muse and Jacob Van Braam, transformed Mount Vernon into a school of arms. Muse frequently instructed young Washington on the art of war, lent him treatises on military tactics, and explained the evolution of the military arm. Jacob Van Braam, a soldier of fortune and a self-professed master of fencing, gave George lessons in handling the sword and accompanied George on several of his wilderness adventures.

In 1751 George accompanied his ailing brother to Barbados, where they hoped that the tropical climate would help Lawrence recover from a racking cough. They returned the following spring but Lawrence died shortly thereafter. Their mutual devotion was evidenced when George was named in Lawrence's will as heir to the estate after Ann and daughter Sarah. Lawrence also left George a social

OFFICERS! FRONT AND CENTER!

On Christmas Day in 1776, General George Washington's troops crossed the Delaware to attack and defeat the Hessian troops in winter quarters at Trenton, New Jersey, in an operation that has been pointed to with pride ever since.

Washington's troops had been driven across New Jersey. They had crossed the Delaware River and had taken up winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. It was a cold winter and the troops were suffering. The morale of the troops and the American colonists was low. Washington conceived of a bold stroke. He would cross the Delaware on Christmas Day and deliver a surprise attack on the Hessians in their winter quarters in Trenton.

This was not a simple operation. The wide Delaware had to be crossed, and accounts state that there was some floating ice in it. The area had many Tories, and there was a possibility that there were even some on Washington's staff. His most trusted staff officer was Major General Lord Stirling, who was his Engineer with the title of Chief Artificer. This officer, General Washington, and an aide even planned the operation in a house away from the rest of the staff to avoid premature disclosure.

In the meantime, Lord Stirling assembled ore boats to carry the troops. These were stable, flat-bottomed boats that drew little water; they were used to bring iron ore down the Delaware to forges. They were manned by a company of men from Marble Head, Massachusetts, many of whom had been fishermen.

On Christmas morning the plans were ready. Washington ordered his troops to form for parade at 1600 and to bring one day's rations with them. When assembled, Washington ordered the officers to come forward and report to him. Then he informed them of the operation and told them to take their men to the boats. The men were not to be instructed on the operation until they were loaded in the boats. Lord Stirling supervised the loading and the crossing.

The rest is well-known history. The Hessians had been celebrating Christmas and were surprised and defeated.

Many believe that the Army custom of calling officers Front and Center at evening parade came from the way General Washington issued his orders on Christmas Day, 1776. (General Bruce C. Clarke, United States Army, Retired.)

legacy that would open important doors in the years to come.

The elder William Fairfax was a grandfather figure for George and was also influential in Washington's character development. He gave his young friend a knowledge of men and manners that no school could and was instrumental in seeing to several of Washington's early jobs.

Washington and Lord Fairfax's son, William George Fairfax, who shared a mutual attraction for the science of surveying, in 1748 traveled as a survey team into the Blue Ridge and Shenandoah wilderness. This shared adventure cemented a lifelong friendship.

George married the widow Martha Dandridge Custis in January 1759. They

had met the year before and, according to *George Washington Parke Custis in his Recollections*, "It was love at first sight."

Martha was only five feet tall, with dark hair, beautiful teeth, hazel eyes, and a plump figure. She was infectiously gentle. She brought to the marriage her late husband's money and his two children.

Despite some initial disagreements, Martha soon created what George had yearned for but never enjoyed at Ferry Farm—a happy home life. Their love and mutual devotion developed as the relationship matured.

Earlier, in 1752, Washington's military career had begun, in effect, when he was appointed adjutant general in the Virginia militia. The following year he was dispatched by Governor Dinwiddie with a

message of protest to the French commandant on the Ohio. The criteria for selecting someone for this dangerous mission were physical strength and moral energy, the courage to cope with the Indians, and the necessary sagacity to negotiate with white men. Although George was only 22, Dinwiddie had confidence in his judgment and abilities.

Washington returned in January 1754 with a defiant message from the French, and the governor immediately took steps to send the Virginia militia into the disputed territories. Lieutenant Colonel Washington, the second-in-command, led the advance party into the wilderness and met and defeated a small group of French troops. Subsequently, the party made camp at Great Meadows and resumed work on Fort Necessity. Meanwhile, the militia commander died at Will's Creek, and this propelled Washington into command.

Throughout the campaign, Washington showed great boldness. On one occasion he met a French force of approximately 1,000 men with only 150 raw recruits. His fearlessness and consequent intimidation of the French went far to offset his inferiority in numbers.

AIDE-DE-CAMP

In April 1755 British General Edward Braddock appointed Washington as an aide-de-camp for his frontier campaign. Interestingly, the British treated him with the utmost courtesy, and he eventually gained Braddock's respect and affection.

Braddock's force marched slowly north. On 9 July it crossed the Monongahela River and was immediately attacked by some 900 French and Indians, who quickly enveloped the British flanks and threatened to completely destroy the larger British force.

At the beginning of the attack, Washington was in trail, suffering from a fever. But at the sound of battle, he mounted his horse and rode everywhere, carrying the orders of his general. Washington's clothing was ripped four times by musket shots, and he had two horses shot from under him.

Washington emerged from this unsuccessful mission as a heroic redeemer of colonial honor. As a result he was commissioned a colonel and made com-

mander-in-chief of the forces for the defense of Virginia with full power to carry out offensive and defensive actions. For two years he protected the vast 350 miles of Virginia frontier with no more than 700 men.

During this command, Washington's leadership was severely tested. In an effort to bring discipline to his militia he established strict rules. For example, he observed that "the men of this regiment are very profane and reprobate" and said "if they do not leave [these practices] off, they shall be severely punished." He promised 100 lashes to any soldier found drunk. He also forced his soldiers to take part in organized prayer meetings. But he was always learning and investigating and continued to study. He bought and read practically every military work he could find. The benefits of his independent study became evident in 1776 and 1777 during his second reconstruction of the Continental Army. His views on cavalry and artillery could only have been formulated by a man of broad military reading and culture.

During the years between his resignation from the militia and the Revolution, he remained in the public eye. Because the local citizens regarded him as a savior, he was consistently re-elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses until 1775. Between trips to Williamsburg for legislative sessions, he managed properties that eventually included nearly 8,000 acres and hundreds of slaves.

PREPARATION

These experiences helped to prepare Washington for his role as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. The years in the wilderness had toughened him and sharpened his ability to survive, fight, and lead. His "gentleman" years as a government leader and plantation owner and manager had prepared him to manage the vast resources required to support an army in the field and to cope with national and international political negotiations.

Washington's character was evidenced in both significant and subtle situations throughout the American Revolution. Prior to the Battle of Germantown in October 1777, for example, a North Carolina soldier asked Washington to

drink wine with him. At first Washington refused. The soldier exclaimed, "You're above drinking with soldiers!" Washington responded, "Come, I'll drink with you." Afterward the soldier told Washington, "Now, I'll be damned if I don't spend the last drop of my heart's blood for you." This is evidence of Washington's cold exterior but sensitive heart. He even carried this demeanor into battle. French staff officer Barbe-Marbois recorded, "I have been told that he [Washington] preserves in battle the character of humanity which makes him so dear to his soldiers in camp."

During a battle, he would often ride along his lines cheering and calming his soldiers and supervising their firing and movement. His emotion and compassion were especially evident during the winters at Morristown and Valley Forge. Despite the Army's deprivations, he remained hopeful. He wrote from Valley Forge to a friend, "I have no doubt that everything happened for the best, that we shall triumph over all our misfortunes and in the end be happy."

COMPASSION

During the Battle of Princeton on 3 January 1777, Washington rode past an American soldier who was leaning over a wounded British soldier and trying to rob him. Washington drove the thief off and placed a guard over the Redcoat until he could be evacuated.

The great German strategist Von Moltke commented on Washington's tactics during the war. He said "no finer movement was ever executed than the retreat across the Jerseys, the return across the Delaware a first time, and then a second, so as to draw out the enemy in a long thin line." Washington's tactical wisdom, prudence, daring, and quick and hard strikes were expertly and boldly evidenced at Trenton, Princeton, Germantown, Monmouth, and Yorktown.

Washington was not impetuous. Rather, his strongest feature was prudence, and he never acted until every circumstance, every consideration had been maturely weighed. He was a perfectionist. His ruling passion was for accomplishment, and his greatest frustration was military defeat. It appears that the more compli-



cated the task and the more overwhelming the odds, the better he performed.

Washington's brigade inspector during the Revolution, General Robert Porterfield, once found the commander on his knees in morning devotion. General Alexander Hamilton confirmed that this was Washington's daily habit. "He gave a part of every day (during the war) to private prayer and devotion."

Washington was regarded throughout the colonies as a sincere believer in Christianity—a devout man. He once said: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

George Washington provides an excellent study of the important phenomenon called character. The raw material he inherited was not especially unique, for he was not a genius. He was a typical young man who was aided through life by a desire for accomplishment, by a number

of deep-seated values, and by significant relationships and experiences that provided direction and encouragement.

Washington's character was, in today's terms, a combat multiplier for him, and character can be a significant factor for today's leaders as well.

Character development requires a two-part approach: First, leaders must ensure that they are building their own character to reflect the ideals of the nation and the military profession. And then, these same leaders must influence the development of the character of their subordinates.

Building personal character begins with taking inventory of one's own dominant behavioral tendencies and values. With this in focus the leader should then determine his goals. Finally, he must realize that building character requires hard work, study, and challenging experiences. In short, the leader must develop daily

habits of living and working that continually hone his desirable behavioral tendencies and values.

In developing the character of his subordinates, a leader must begin by being a role model. He and each subordinate must agree on the behavioral tendencies and values that will support the subordinate's professional goals. Then the leader must establish a command climate that supports the development process, providing stressful experiences and consistently rewarding actions that support the development of the desirable ends.

Frederick the Great once said:

A mule who has carried a pack for ten campaigns under Prince Eugene will be no better tactician for it, and it must be confessed, to the disgrace of humanity, that many men grow old in an otherwise respectable profession without making any greater progress than this mule.

To follow the routine of the service, to become occupied with the care of its fodder and lodging, to march when the army marches, camp when it camps, fight when it fights—for the great majority of officers this is what is meant by having served, campaigned, grown gray in the harness. For this reason one sees so many soldiers occupied with trifling matters and rusted by gross ignorance. Instead of soaring audaciously among the clouds,

such men know only how to crawl methodically in the mire. They are never perplexed and will never know the causes of their triumphs and defeats.

Every military organization—as Frederick suggests—has those who soar and those who “crawl methodically in the mire.” Our Army needs leaders of character who can soar audaciously and capitalize on the knowledge, experience, critical judgment, ideal values, and deep

thinking of the true military professional. The end product will be character, the kind that becomes the decisive factor in battle.

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Loyalty

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES W. TOWNSEND

In any unit people talk and think about loyalty. Bosses demand it, for themselves and their organizations. It follows that the soldiers in the trenches, the subordinates, ponder how loyalty is perceived by the boss. But saying “Be loyal” is not a simple, two-word end-of-transmission solution. The various aspects of loyalty are more complex than that.

Loyalty, according to Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary is “faithful allegiance to a leader, organization, or course.” Army Field Manual 22-100, Military Leadership, classes loyalty as a leadership trait and defines it as “the quality of faithfulness to country, the Army, seniors, subordinates, and peers.” In this sense loyalty transcends rank and applies with equal force to corporals leading crews and teams and to generals leading divisions and corps. It is universal and fundamental.

Loyalty is critical to a proper organizational climate in a unit, and its presence can be felt throughout a unit. Its directions point upward, downward, and laterally. When it works properly in all directions, the leader or commander senses that the unit is cohesive, supportive, and responsive. In turn, the soldiers in the unit feel they are being cared for and are part of

a team organization that truly looks out for its people.

Upward loyalty means being loyal to the boss, to the leader, to the commander. Downward loyalty is the leader’s loyalty to his subordinates, his people, his team. Lateral loyalty is loyalty to adjacent organizations, units, and sections; it has to do with being a team player. (In the eyes of some leaders, downward loyalty is the most important kind.)

In discussing loyalty toward the boss or leader or commander, the key thing to remember is that “the boss is the boss.” He must be followed and obeyed; otherwise, disorganization and disunity set in. The missions and objectives of the unit must be supported. The boss’s problems and worries should be the subordinate’s problems and worries. A unit has to reflect its boss, and people have to be responsive. To think otherwise runs counter to the tradition and history of effective, high performing combat units. The ultimate proof of loyalty upward occurs in battle, where units must respond instantly, without question, in the face of deadly enemy fire.

A significant aspect of loyalty to the boss is the flow of information upward. The boss must be kept informed. This does not mean intruding on his time for

trivial matters. After all, he is a busy man and his time is precious. But he needs, routinely, to know three things—the subordinate unit’s goals, challenges, and scheduled events. As one technique, all three can be presented to the commander (at battalion level and higher) through a published quarterly training program, updated by monthly informal review meetings between commanders.

A training program clearly states the unit’s goals for the coming quarter; it notes any shortfalls or problems or challenges that may be facing the unit; and the calendar serves as a schedule of events. When the boss gets a copy of the training program or is briefed on it, he has a chance to add to or delete from it. In addition, he is informed, and a contract is established between him and the subordinate commander. The boss knows what the subordinate is planning to do and when he is planning to do it.

Upward loyalty sometimes means telling the boss he is wrong, and this requires real moral courage. How does a subordinate leader do this? First, he makes sure he is right. Unless the decision or policy in question is of immediate importance, he should sit on it for a couple of days, making sure he understands it fully and