

Commandant's Note

BRIGADIER GENERAL BENJAMIN C. FREAKLEY

WARRIOR ETHOS — HEART OF THE INFANTRY

All Soldiers must be Warriors. This goes to the heart of what soldiering is all about, because it comprises those moral, ethical, and psychological attributes that ultimately define success on the battlefield and guide us as Soldiers. The Warrior Ethos demands that we put the mission ahead of all else, refuse to accept defeat, never quit, and never leave a fallen comrade. But this Ethos does not — and indeed cannot — limit itself only to how we conduct ourselves in combat. It must be inculcated into every Soldier from the time of enlistment until that man or woman carries those attributes into civilian life. Ours is a values-based Army, something that the Infantry best personifies and demonstrates in the way we carry out our jobs every day. The seven Army values define what we must demand of ourselves and of each other, and are the foundation of the Soldier's Creed that appears on the inside back cover of this magazine.

Today's operational environment requires that we remain receptive to change so that we may capitalize on our burgeoning advances in technology and do our missions better. The battlefield communications, target acquisition, and weapons systems that we now see in development and fielding were unimaginable even two decades ago, but today they are our stock in trade. With them has come the realization of the inevitability of change and the necessity of adaptation to new and improved ways of warfighting. We accept and enthusiastically endorse this. But we are also in the profession of killing those who would attack our nation at home and abroad. It is the widespread understanding of this, among allies and adversaries alike, that makes possible both credible deterrence and the assurance that we will destroy any foe who chooses to test our resolve. In this time of change, the Infantry recognizes two unchanging tenets of our profession: that the infantry fight is a close, personal, and violent one; and that the Warrior Ethos is the foundation of the American Soldier's total commitment to victory in peace and war. It is the moral and ethical soul of the Infantry and the Soldiers who personify her. Today we see this Ethos reflected in the countless reports and anecdotes out of Iraq and Afghanistan, where our Soldiers are standing toe to toe with our enemies, and punishing them more severely than these adversaries



could have ever imagined. Closing with and destroying an enemy, however, is but one facet of the Infantry's mission. This is evident in the array of humanitarian missions our troops are carrying out today in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in other regions where threat of armed conflict is ever-present. Even as our Soldiers perform those missions essential to the rebuilding of nations — many of which take place in unstable urban settings — the current operating environment dictates that they be prepared to again rapidly transition into the familiar infantry task of closing with and destroying the enemy. And that calls for Warriors.

Task Force Soldier, based right here at Fort Benning, has developed a three-pronged strategy for the Warrior Ethos Implementation, which addresses Warrior Skills, Warrior Culture, and Mental and Physical Toughness. The implementation itself will be infused throughout the Army both from the bottom up and from the top down. While Soldiers entering service for the first time are learning the Warrior Skills, the Army's senior leadership will likewise take part in what amounts to a fundamental shift in how the Army thinks collectively. They will gain a thorough understanding of the Warrior Culture, and hence will be better able to sustain Soldiers in their understanding of — and commitment to — Warrior Ethos. These first two measures will serve as cornerstones of our education and information campaign to educate the Army, its leaders, and the American public.

The third prong of our implementation is Mental and Physical Toughness. The warrior must be both mentally and physically tougher than his opponent, because to simply survive on the battlefield is not enough. He must be able to endure the physical and mental hardships of combat and retain that inner determination to engage and kill his adversary. We are also expanding our modern Army combatives program.

We can best foster and sustain Warrior Ethos through training and experience. Our training of infantrymen is the best in the world, and we want to make sure that Soldiers in all military occupational specialties (MOS) other than infantry likewise have the skills and the physical and mental desire to aggressively close with and destroy any enemy who could impede the performance of their mission. The secure rear areas of the past — and the false sense of security they implied — no longer exist in today's



operating environment. Logistical facilities and convoys are potentially lucrative and tempting targets, and we will make sure that any adversary who thinks of them as our soft underbelly will find he has walked into a hornet's nest.

But training is only the first step; the experience and confidence gained by those who meet the test of combat will permeate the force and exhort others to emulate them. Proverbs xxvii, 17 tells us that "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Leadership will both hone and maintain the warrior focus of our Soldiers, and will build upon the qualities they carried into the Army. Warriors create more Warriors by their example, and we can infuse combat and operational experience into our training by assigning Soldiers with these backgrounds to our service schools. These alumni from recent field assignments can thus pass on their experience to those who will replace them in the global war on terror. Their credentials will add a measure of credibility to their subject matter expertise in our institutions. Although one observation does not a trend make, we must capture those enduring lessons learned and inculcate them into our doctrine. The introduction of our combat leadership speaker program here at Fort Benning is a valuable step toward this goal.

The training of our junior officers is key to the assimilation of Warrior Ethos into the core of our Army, for it is they who must demonstrate their commitment by example. We are attempting to accelerate implementation of the Basic Officer Leader Course II (BOLC II) as our main effort for building Warrior Ethos from the bottom up in our officer corps. We are likewise infusing those

same principles into our Initial Entry Training, the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, and the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course curricula. As these young leaders attain positions of increasingly greater responsibility — along with a concomitantly greater ability to influence change — they will sustain the Army's Warrior Culture.

Finally, we see the expansion of Ranger training opportunities to other than combat arms Soldiers as vital to the propagation of an Army-wide Warrior Ethos. All branches that support infantry and armor task forces need access to this, the premier Army Warrior school, because it is Ranger School that best replicates what we can expect in combat. In so doing, it teaches students to function effectively under conditions of mental and physical stress found in no other Army school, something that will pay dividends when they must face the demands of operational assignments.

Warrior Ethos is both a goal and an azimuth for our Army and the Infantry. We are committed to its realization because it will develop, attract, and retain the flexible, adaptive, and competent Soldiers who live the Army's Warrior Culture. These Soldiers are grounded in the Army Values and live the Warrior Ethos in the field, in garrison, and in their contact with their fellow Americans. The Infantry leads the way in providing the climate, training and resources to develop and sustain the Warrior Ethos. America and her citizens may be assured of security in their jobs and homes, and our enemies must recognize the folly of attacking the United States, her people, or her interests, either here or anywhere in the world. Follow me!