

## **Our Profession of Arms: Ethical Principles in the 21st Century Army**

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### Abstract:

Contemporary America is an ever-evolving society in which a collective atmosphere of moral relativism prevails. Into this realm of “anything goes,” the Army finds itself trying to adapt in a nebulous period of force reductions, restructuring, and transitioning from direct combat while maintaining a force capable of fighting and winning our Nation’s wars. From the day that a young man or woman raises their right hand and takes their oath of allegiance to serve in the United States Army, they distinguish themselves through a willingness to sacrifice-possibly everything- in order to serve the larger society. In return, America entrusts them with the authorized power of life and death while serving the greater good. It is an awesome responsibility that brings with it a call to adhere to a higher standard of conduct and actions. Indeed, those who enter this profession of arms sacrifice numerous personal liberties, including safety, and take on the mantle of proper conduct under the Army’s Standards.

In our contemporary Army we must look at our role as ethical standard-bearers for our diverse nation. Key questions concern our shared Army standards of ethical conduct and their guiding principles within an imprecise society. We must determine both how to instill a shared set of virtues in our Soldiers as well as what constitutes these virtues. To this end, I am proposing a set of ten Ethical Virtues entitled “The Virtues of a Professional Soldier.” In this paper, I first expound on these ten virtues within our contemporary Army. I then focus on these virtues through the lens of the Seven Army Values, noting how they are of continued relevance today. Finally, I propose a way ahead which combines these ethical virtues with our Army Profession, thereby yielding a roadmap for the future of our ethical education within our diverse military society.

### The Virtues of a Professional Soldier:

1. Respect Others and Respect Yourself
2. Give Opportunities to Others Based on Tolerance and Fairness
3. Promote a Climate of Support
4. Teach, Model, and Lead Based on a Balanced Work and Rest Cycle
5. Honor and Value the Legacy of Those Who Previously Served
6. Promote Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health
7. Support Positive Interpersonal Relationships
8. Respect the Possessions of Others
9. Operate Honestly in Words and Actions
10. Thrive in Your Current Location and Capacity

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## **Introduction**

Many news services recently noted that only about one half of one percent of the nation is part of the Armed Services. By sheer statistics alone, these men and women are a distinct group set apart by our nation for the purpose of defending our country and our national interests. From the day that a young man or woman raises their right hand and takes their oath of allegiance to serve in the United States Army, they distinguish themselves through a willingness to sacrifice, possibly everything, in order to serve the larger society. In return, America entrusts them with the authorized power of life and death while serving the greater good. It is this awesome responsibility that brings with it a call to adhere to a higher standard of conduct and actions. Indeed, those who enter this profession of arms sacrifice numerous personal liberties, including safety, and take on the mantle of proper conduct under the Army's Standards.

Our military is a wonderfully diverse collection of people who enter into uniformed service with a wide-range of experiences, perceptions, abilities, expectations, and senses of what they consider to be "right" or "wrong." Telling a lie is generally considered "wrong;" however, I have witnessed Soldiers who do not believe it is wrong to tell a lie if telling this lie will keep them from getting into trouble. For instance, stating that a task is complete when it is not. As a matter of fact, they have every intention of completing the task; however, they will not say it is incomplete in order to avoid negative repercussions. I have also seen well-intentioned Soldiers quite willing to contribute twenty dollars to assist someone who is having financial difficulty. These same well-intentioned Soldiers are also just as willing to "chip in" twenty dollars toward obtaining a stripper for someone's going away party without realizing the sexual exploitation involved in this act.

While many in contemporary society would express a general philosophy of “live and let live,” within our military, we are interconnected by the actions of others. The actions of a small group of individuals who burn an indigenous holy book will directly, negatively, impact the entire force in that region. A lone Soldier’s offense to a tribal leader can undermine years of positive relationship building. We are like the story of the 2 men in a rowboat. These men were out on a lake one particular morning when the first man reached into his bag, pulled out a drill, and started boring holes into the bottom of the boat. Needless to say, the second man was very upset and asked what the first man was doing.

The answer he received was, “Don’t worry about it. These holes are under my seat.”

Of course the second man, as well as the first, should be worried about the holes because they were both in the now leaking boat together. This example holds true for us today because the actions of one or a few affecting all of us in this giant rowboat known as the Army.

On a more positive note, it is precisely because of our diversity that our military personnel have been so historically successful when faced with such varying challenges as combat or personal interactions on a life and death stage. Diversity in the form of ingenuity as well as different perspectives, expertise, and ideas have yielded positive results and mission accomplishment throughout our country’s history. The challenge is to unite a diverse group of people in order to achieve our Nation’s goals.

Within the military we are part of something much larger than ourselves. At many historic sites around the United States, one may see old stone buildings erected a century or two ago still standing despite the wear of years and the elements. These buildings are a collection of stones of varying shapes, colors, sizes, and textures held together by mortar and forming a united

structure. Much like these stone buildings, the Army is held together by our shared beliefs and ethos presently defined as our Army Profession.

To this end, I am proposing a set of ten Ethical Virtues entitled “The Virtues of a Professional Soldier.” These virtue ethics are based on an Aristotelian model of “What would a virtuous person do?” Therefore, I aspire to a life view rather than a checklist; an internalizing versus a “can we” or “should we” directory of action. These virtue ethics become parameters, or in military terms, a “left and right limit,” between which personnel are encouraged to utilize their wonderful diversity toward achieving our Army’s desired, “positive,” outcome regarding actions and choices.

As we enter a nebulous period of force reductions, restructuring, and transitioning from direct combat, we, in the Army, must look once again at our role as ethical standard bearers for our nation. In this arena we encounter words such as “ethics,” “values,” “virtues,” and “principles” which must first be addressed and then applied to our contemporary situation. “Ethics is about what ought to be—about the standards by which we judge character and action.” (Gill, 12) Hence, our ethics serve to guide our decisions by pointing us in the right direction to reach our desired “ought to be” end state. “Values” identify “certain attributes of our character as ‘having worth’ to us, as things that we approve.” (Gill, 29) A critique of a common use of the language of “values” leads us into an understanding of “virtues.” “We also should note the fact that we have taken an economic term (‘value’) and applied it wholesale to character issues... So it is better to use ‘values’ language sparingly and try to recapture the great classical language of virtue.” (Gill, 20) Within this view, “virtue” is the word attributed to traits of good character which it should be promoted and emulated. “Principle” is defined as “a brief statement that serves as an action guide determining the right thing to do (or prohibiting the wrong thing).”

(Gill, 27) Together these definitions, their supporting ideas, and how they are used work to provide a direction for an organization and its members.

In this paper, I first expound on these ten virtues within our contemporary Army. I then focus on these virtues through the lens of the Seven Army Values, noting how they are of continued relevance today. Finally, I propose a way ahead which combines these ethical virtues with our Army Profession, thereby yielding a roadmap for the future of our ethical education within our diverse military society.

PART 1: 10 VIRTUES OF PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS

Table 1

The Virtues of a Professional Soldier:

- 1. Respect Others and Respect Yourself*
- 2. Give Opportunities to Others Based on Tolerance and Fairness*
- 3. Promote a Climate of Support*
- 4. Teach, Model, and Lead Based on a Balanced Work and Rest Cycle*
- 5. Honor and Value the Legacy of Those Who Previously Served*
- 6. Promote Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health*
- 7. Support Positive Interpersonal Relationships*
- 8. Respect the Possessions of Others*
- 9. Operate Honestly in Words and Actions*
- 10. Thrive in Your Current Location and Capacity*

## **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #1: Respect Others and Respect Yourself**

All people intrinsically have value. While a society will associate rank or prestige based on any number of factors, the bottom line is that people are naturally of worth. This means that every Soldier, every family member, every civilian, and every local national we may encounter in a deployed environment is worthy of respect. In truth, even the individual enemy soldiers we fight are worthy of respect as humans. We may need to kill our enemy's forces, but we must still afford them with basic human respect when encountered as prisoners or in regard to the treatment of their remains. Further, as Soldiers we are to have a respect for ourselves as well. In looking at this first guideline we identify what our Nation expects of its Soldiers and the importance of acting in a manner of respect in words and actions.

The mantle of responsibility placed upon Soldiers is a position of trust. This trust first holds a call to value and protect other people. Soldiers are charged to assist those whom they serve as well as those who are in need. Respectful, proper treatment of others entails ensuring their safety, providing due diligence in regard to interactions, and respecting their civil liberties. It is very easy to support those who are appreciative or receptive of our support and actions. It is extremely difficult to value and respect those who at best do not appreciate what you do and, at worst, are outright hostile to your endeavors. I am not referencing enemies in combat; rather I am addressing those members of our larger communities. Specifically civilians who live outside our gates as well as civilians living or working in areas to which we are deployed. Our challenge as Soldiers is to treat others with basic human respect and offer needed support regardless of their citizenship or past confrontational actions. As Soldiers our duty is to complete our missions while holding ourselves to a higher moral standard. This standard means we do not respond to an affront with physical retaliation, such as harming the one who offended us, instead, we take

the moral high ground of refraining from retribution. In so acting, abuse or torture is prohibited through the knowledge that our duty requires more of us as Soldiers than responding to hostile actions in kind. The significant mode of Soldier action becomes “restraint” which is power under control.

In the course of counseling Soldiers as a Chaplain one of the most challenging issues I have witnessed among our Servicemen and women is the issue of self-respect. There are countless times when Soldiers have made very negative or destructive choices based on significant feelings of low self-worth. Closely tied to these feelings are instances in which Soldiers have turned to destructive sexual acts. These choices are often made in an attempt to try and find someone who would love them even if it were for only a little while. They feel unworthy of love and sell their self-worth for an attempt to feel valued or “loved” even if it is only short-term.

Valuing and respecting oneself is not vanity or egoism. It is realizing that you are valuable in and of yourself without needing to add qualifiers. By this I mean, an accepting of who you are period without believing you are only of worth if you achieve this rank or attend this school or carry yourself in a certain manner. It is very easy to get wrapped up in our culture which praises wealth, youth, appearance, and power and compare ourselves to an unattainable ideal. When this occurs, the value we attribute to ourselves can be very low which, in turn, can lead to very negative, destructive choices and actions. When someone takes an honest assessment of their own worth based on the innate right of respect, the likelihood of destructive decisions will decrease. Further, someone who maintains a very negative personal opinion regarding their worth will most assuredly fail to value other people as being worthy of respect.

A visible indicator of someone facing difficulties is evidenced by their general appearance. A Soldier experiencing difficulties or a lack of self respect will most often appear unkempt and will be quite lax in their military bearing. On the other hand, a Soldier who is confident in their skills and takes pride in their appearance and actions will easily be identified through their proper deportment. Overall bearing goes hand in hand with maintaining proper focus and attention to detail which helps ensure success at all levels. Further, it is very hard to give respect to other people when you do not have respect for yourself. Proper bearing brings with it honor to both nation and self. An age old maxim states, "Your actions speak louder than your words". This is very true in regard to the Value "Integrity." As Soldiers we must not only "say" the right things, we must embody them in our in our actions toward ourselves and others. This entails such actions as looking directly at someone while they are speaking to us instead of looking past them or continuing with what we were doing. This also involves actively listening to what others are saying versus spending the time they are talking trying to think of our own response. Another action, which would indicate respect for others and us, is to follow through on what is discussed. In life we have all experienced times when we were counting on someone to accomplish something we had talked about only to feel devalued when they let us down. Conversely we have also experienced times where we have felt valued due to others fulfilling their promises with their promised actions.

We are further charged with placing the needs of others ahead of our own in many areas. These acts of selfless service are quite familiar to all Soldiers. We voluntarily place ourselves in "harm's way" in order to protect and defend those under our care. We constantly place personal comfort aside so that we may go out of our way to aid those whose safety is imperiled. Our challenge as professionals is to continue to respect others around us as well as work to ensure

that those to our left and right maintain this high standard of excellence. A particular challenge within the Army is to value and respect our Brothers and Sisters in Arms who might be outside the ideal. I am referring to Soldiers who are either facing medical complications and are no longer able to function at 100% as well as soldiers who are not meeting standards or expectations. When serving within combat arms units, I have witnessed firsthand the ostracism that can quickly occur when someone fails to meet standards of performance. We are not to reduce our set standards of performance or of action; however, as Professionals who value all people, we are still expected to assist and treat these Soldiers with respect in word and deed until such time as they meet the standards or are separated from the Army.

When people feel valued and respected they are much more willing to work together toward a larger objective. Also, when those we encounter feel valued and respected, their attitudes tend to become much more positive. This is not a complete given and we should not merely treat others with respect in order to gain something. We should treat others with value and respect simply because all people deserve this basic human right. It is very challenging to treat an enemy combatant with dignity after they have just attacked us and then surrendered, but this is precisely what we as American Soldiers have been tasked to do since the time of George Washington. While it is tempting to relieve some degree of frustration by hitting someone or pushing them unnecessarily, these acts neither help our overall mission nor our moral standing on the world stage.

### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #2: Give Others Opportunities Based on Tolerance and Fairness**

A Soldier should give everyone an opportunity to achieve or be known based on his or her own worth without any preconceived opinions or prejudgments. While it is of the utmost importance to work as a part of a team and as part of the larger Army structure, it is still

important to remember the value of individual people. It is human nature to group things which appear to be similar. While this works well with ordering inventories or understanding mathematical patterns, Soldiers must never forget that people, be they Soldier or civilian, cannot be easily grouped without knowing something about them. Significant problems impacting interpersonal relationships and even mission accomplishment often stem from thoughts which associate a blanket label of “them” or “they” to other people.

Conversely, we have a set of expectations regarding Soldiers we identify with such words as “Commander” or “Chief” or “Long Tabber.” These examples and numerous others like them stem from a system of credentialing in which trust is placed in a process that consistently produces persons of particular aptitude, skill, and character. If one of these “credentialed” Soldiers fails to live up to the expectations associated with their positive label, a feeling of shock or surprise occurs. The same sense of shock or surprise is felt when someone with a negative label acts in a very positive way. In both these instances, the Soldiers’ actions deviated from what was expected from them.

The Army is a meritocracy which means all Soldiers have the opportunity to advance in rank based on their abilities. The Army Chief of Staff was once a Second Lieutenant and the Command Sergeant Major of the Army was once a Private entering service through his local Military Entrance Processing Station. These men had the opportunity to advance in rank and position based on their demonstrated leadership potential and skill as do Soldiers to this day. Lest we fail our future leaders, it is highly important that we allow Soldiers of all ranks the opportunity to succeed without prejudging their skill or talent. Soldiers must be given a fair chance to learn and grow as they develop their leadership potential. Our task becomes allowing

growth opportunities and supporting these Soldiers working toward their success. As they learn, grow, and perform, their leadership skills are enhanced and the Army as a whole benefits.

It is necessary to trust the quality of leaders produced by our military educational organization and our numerous schools lest we live in a constant state of uncertainty. It is also necessary for the Professional Soldier to be respectful and give due consideration to everyone they encounter regardless of prejudices or preconceptions. This holds true for Soldiers and civilians alike. It is very tempting to prejudge individuals in another nation due to their appearance, way of life, or especially based on the actions of a small number of their countrymen. When this occurs, we all run a risk of devaluing host country nationals which often leads to disrespecting their culture or viewing them as less than human. In light of these challenges, it is very important that Soldiers give others a chance to succeed on their own merit, learn about cultural factors which directly impact those we encounter, and refrain from prejudging others with language or attitudes.

The United States was founded upon the belief of the right of liberty for all humans. Our challenge as Professional Soldiers is to be loyal to our Constitution by supporting the rights of others without prejudice or undue regard to their lack of status. Just as our judicial structure celebrates the impartiality of justice our actions and treatment of others must also stem from a position of impartiality due to the inherent self worth of all people. Our adherence to our Professional values in this area produces an extra step for Soldiers in relating to everyone we encounter. This step is not an excessive measure placing an undue burden on Soldiers; rather it is taking a moment to think prior to acting in order to ensure that one's actions are in keeping with the intent of the Constitution to which we have sworn allegiance. Soldiers in the middle of a combat situation still adhere to the proper rules of engagement which entail "thinking" which

they have internalized. Thinking before acting in regard to our treatment, actions, and words directed at those we encounter while in uniform stands in a long tradition of giving others the opportunity to be appraised based on their own merit rather than prejudgments. When we act in this manner we are allowing others the chance to grow in ability and strive toward success.

Our job as Soldiers is to serve our national interests. In the contemporary Army environment Soldiers work in numerous capacities and on varying missions with a wide variety of military and civilian personnel in Garrison and while deployed. Along with American service personnel 21st century Soldiers will often work alongside foreign nationals, third country nationals, Members of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the military personnel of other nations. It is not only common, but expected for Soldiers to take pride in their Unit and their Unit's abilities. We must value our own Unit while also respecting those we find ourselves working with who may very well be quite different in actions, training, and/or abilities.

Inter-service rivalries provide a sense of competition aimed at improving overall performance in pursuit of victory; however, when these rivalries get taken to the extreme mission accomplishment is imperiled. The better course of action for the Professional Soldier is to respect their Service, but also their fellow servicemen and women. Two steps will facilitate this actually happening. The first step in this regard is to trust our overall military training systems. This will cause us to give the benefit of the doubt to other American service personnel in regard to their credibility and capabilities. Granted, there may be exceptions to the rule; however, when we begin our inter-service relationships from a position of respect versus one of prejudicial judgment success in a joint environment is more likely to occur. This leads directly to the second step which involves actually taking the time to get to know the other people with whom we serve. To use a football analogy, while some teams can have a degree of success with the

offense and the defense functioning and socializing independently of one another, truly great “teams” are marked by all members maintaining both mutual respect as well as a larger sense of camaraderie.

A similar pattern emerges in dealing with non-US military personnel in Garrison and “downrange.” Our duty to our nation extends beyond our own personal opinions and bias and calls on us to interact with others with whom we may initially appear to have little in common. Our challenge is to move beyond preconceptions and move from a view of “them” to a knowledge of who they are and what they are capable of doing. A very good example of this occurred during the deployment of 2 Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from 2010-2011. The Brigade Commander specified a policy of, and embodied, getting to know our Afghan counterparts as well as all the varying “non-U.S. Army” personnel. This overall push to work as members of a larger team greatly aided the success of this Unit’s mission.

Particularly troubling is when host country nationals exhibit animosity toward us. It is only natural to become frustrated when you believe you are in a country to help its citizens and then receive ill treatment, angst, or hostility from the very people you are attempting to aid. Our challenge is to maintain our integrity, continue with our missions, and display respect to host country nationals. This is not merely accepting harsh treatment without leaders working to remedy the issues, but is refraining from merely responding to a negative situation in kind without thinking. A common enemy tactic was to fire at a convoy from within a crowd of civilians in order to draw retaliatory fire and drive a wedge between U.S. force and the local populace. Thinking Soldiers adhering to the rules of engagement do not indiscriminately fire into the crowd and though they are risking injury to themselves, they achieve the greater good

through their discernment and discrimination. This holds true in regard to attitudes and actions toward ill treatment as well. Merely responding to animosity with anger yields more hostility whereas responding to ill treatment with respect (along with leaders working to make the situation better) garners more positive results.

A key bit of information for the Professional Soldier to always remember is that the actions of others may well stem from significant cultural differences. While we may find it odd to eat rice with our hands, as some people do, others may find it odd that we wear our boots inside our dwellings. Neither of these practices are “wrong,” but both do highlight differences based on culture. Within our Army we have numerous cultures represented which yield many differing opinions and actions. Instead of automatically judging everyone’s actions based on how they agree or deviate from our own perceived “norm,” we are all better served if we first seek to understand why someone is doing what they are doing. This activity highlights the role of respect with regard to treating others with tolerance and fairness. Our movement to understand in order to give respect is further highlighted as we look at how our selfless service ties into this principle.

Professionals are constantly working to improve their skills and their knowledge. As professionals, it is our task to actively participate in the cultural training events provided by our Units, but to also work to educate ourselves in regard to other cultures. One should note that learning about other cultures is not the same as seeking to become a part of that culture nor is it forsaking our own culture. This activity is merely gaining knowledge in order to be better informed in our actions toward others. Cultures often have differing manners in regard to everything from personal space to voice intonation. A Soldier who is used to having three feet between them and the person they are talking with might be startled to begin a conversation and

have the other person stand merely a foot away. Similarly, while our Army culture frowns upon public displays of affection, many of my Unit's meetings with our Afghan counterparts included hugs. While these two examples may not seem earthshaking, they do highlight this point of cultural difference. Without prior knowledge, an American Soldier would assuredly step back from the conversation or recoil from the Afghan's hug. Though it is doubtful that either action would preclude mission success, handling both of the situations in a positive manner would facilitate cohesion and team development. The bottom line for Soldiers is the knowledge that a bit of cultural preparedness can go a long way in enabling future success.

A perpetual lie taught to children throughout the ages states, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Yes, very few people would prefer to be pelted with bricks versus having harsh words uttered in their direction, but the overarching point here in regard to "Honor" is that improper language diminishes the worth of others, decreases efficiency, and decreases effectiveness. Inappropriate language is not just the "givens" of racial or ethnic slurs, but also includes any language which denigrates others. The problem with dishonorable language stems from how it negatively impacts those who express these sentiments as well as those to whom they are addressed. Even if originally only used in a joking manner, repeated usage of slurs or allegedly humorous statements regarding large groups of people inevitably lead to the internalization of these joked about feelings. What was once uttered in jest becomes an actual worldview. This intolerance yields bigotry, division, prevents unit cohesion, and can hamstring missions due to unsubstantiated opinions about partnered organizations.

An additional problem with inappropriate language that pervades the Army is the use of pay grade in place of name or title. For instance, instead of talking about a couple of Staff Sergeants preparing to give a briefing, the statement, "two E-6s are going to brief," is sometimes

used. Soldiers are more than their pay grade and are worthy of the basic respect they have earned. Even the newest Private has volunteered to step outside the comforts of civilian society in order to support the greater good and is thereby worthy of their earned title. Dale Carnegie once noted, “That a man’s name is to him the sweetest and most important sound in any language.” This is due to the sense of self-worth it provides someone to know they rate high enough in another’s regard for them to know their name. The same is true in dealing with Soldiers regarding their rank, position, or name. When visiting Soldiers in the field or combat, I have always been impressed by the high level of morale and the personal excitement of Soldiers who had just received a visit from a senior command level officer or non-commissioned officer that called them by their name.

True Professionalism regarding non-prejudicial treatment is demonstrated when a Soldier is willing to stand up for the rights of those who may make us uncomfortable when they are in need. There is perhaps no more pressing example of doing this exact thing in a life or death situation than that of our Combat Medics who treat injured enemy combatants with the same degree of concern and medical care as our American servicemen and women. It must be very uncomfortable for a Combat Medic to be on the frontline taking extraordinary measures to save the life of a wounded enemy who just injured American Soldiers; yet, they do this very thing time and time again. This is all our example of doing the right thing in the face of any circumstance. As Professional Soldiers, we are tasked to put aside judgment or desire for retribution and adhere to our mission and our Nation’s call of service. While our circumstances may never place us in a position of saving an enemy life, we are to embody this principle in such common ways as speaking up to defend the right of someone’s free speech even if it goes against our desire or the wishes of our friends. We also embody this principle when we afford others

opportunities based on the simple fact that they are Soldiers versus any preconceptions which would bias us against them.

### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #3: Promote a Climate of Support**

The Army is a collection of thousands working together as one. To this end, all Soldiers have to rely on one another to accomplish the larger mission. A tank needs a crew but it also needs maintainers and fuelers, as well as signal and ordnance personnel. It also needs another tank alongside it to operate effectively coupled with infantry support, and the ability to coordinate with “higher.” To eat in a mess hall, Soldiers have to rely on everyone from logistics personnel, to transportation folks, to cooks, and numerous others who are often overlooked. At its core, the Army is about relying on one another as well as mutual support. This holds true in regard to armed conflict as well as in dealing with what are commonly called personal issues involving family, mental health, or general issues impacting a Soldier’s well-being.

The Army as a whole has long understood that personal factors impacting Soldiers also impact their ability to perform their mission. Whether these factors are emotional stress or concern for the well-being of a family member they influence how a Soldier acts while performing their portion of a mission. To this end, the Army has established numerous agencies and support services, to go along with built in support coming from medical personnel and chaplains, who exist to help Soldiers and their families, deal with the challenges of Army life and the events of life itself. Our task as Professional Soldiers is to encourage Soldiers to reach out for assistance, be willing to assist our fellow Soldiers, and be willing to seek assistance ourselves if we need it. Further this principle entails the need for Soldiers to know those who serve around them. It is not enough to know someone as “that guy in second squad,” but to establish a

culture of support in which all Soldiers actually know each other's names and have a corresponding vested interest in ensuring they get help.

Soldiers at all levels must work to ensure a climate of support that encourages Soldiers to get assistance as needed exists where they serve. It is very easy to say the appropriate things and brief the availability of assistance from varying support agencies; however, it is entirely another matter to ensure that a Unit's climate supports seeking assistance. The challenge for Soldiers and leaders is to first understand that seeking help is a sign of strength rather than weakness and second understand that negative attitudes toward seeking assistance speak much louder than any words or signs. A supporting climate acknowledges that sometimes all people need assistance.

An old adage quips, "Even the Lone Ranger had Tonto." Further a supportive climate neither condones negative comments or treatment directed at those seeking aid nor does it allow such actions to occur without correction. It is sometimes very difficult to get a Soldier who is in need to seek professional assistance which may, in fact, save their life. It can be almost impossible to get this Soldier to take proactive assistance seeking measures if they believe they will have to overcome emotional obstacles and possible ostracism in order to get help. It is far better for Soldiers to proactively get assistance when a problem or issue is "small" or only beginning than it is when these issues have shown themselves through disruptive actions. On a purely utilitarian basis alone, it is better for a Soldier to be unavailable for training for one hour while they are receiving much needed external help than it is for their problem to explode in destructive behavior yielding numerous meetings, reviews, counseling sessions with higher level commands, and additional Soldiers missing training in order to serve as escorts of NCOs providing direct supervision of this Soldier. If a Unit's climate encourages assistance seeking,

the Unit's overall performance will most assuredly be enhanced due to well-developed Soldiers who proactively address their issues before they disrupt operations.

A key measure in fostering a climate of support centers on respect. Showing respect for Soldiers who may need assistance as well as the support agencies and helping personnel entails taking the opportunity to learn what assistance is available and how to access this benefit. Our nation spends millions of dollars providing support opportunities for Soldiers, but if they do not know how to receive this assistance, it is all for naught. Leaders at all levels must educate themselves and their Soldiers in how to receive help as well as maintain a contact list of assistance providers. This will facilitate Soldiers receiving the help they need in a timely manner and without having to wait while a search is conducted for the proper agency or referral procedure. An additional step in this regard involves getting to personally know the support personnel by name. Personal knowledge of these providers builds trust in their abilities and makes us "real" to them when the time comes for them to help one of our Soldiers. Furthermore getting to know the names of those with whom we serve goes a very long way in establishing a climate of support as mentioned in regard to our second virtue.

When someone has experienced a tragedy in life, it is often tempting to avoid them not because we do not care, but because we do not know the "right way" to act or treat them. In reality, just being there for someone who is experiencing a challenging situation or series of events is what really matters. At times there is a temptation to avoid those who are seeking help because we may feel we do not know what to say or because we may harbor some feelings that they are "letting everybody down" by attending appointments instead of training. While these feelings are human, they need to be acknowledged and amended.

Someone getting the help they need is a sign of strength rather than a sign of weakness. To this end our treatment of others should not change based on their situation or condition. They are still our battle-buddy or our squad member and worthy of our support and socialization. If anything, our “just being there” will support and positively reaffirm them during their period of getting assistance. In regard to appointments taking away from our free time in order to carry their load, or their missing training, it is important to remember that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” It is far better to lose a small amount of training time if they are able to get the help they need and return to being a vital part of the overall mission than it is to completely lose them and their expertise.

A key for all Soldiers is to have peers who are honorable and trustworthy. Ones you know by name and that you can rely on in times of difficulty. Additionally, we should endeavor to be a person upon whom others may count thereby providing them with another resource for assistance when they may be experiencing challenges. Many times, just having another person in which to confide is the timely resource that may make all the difference in the well-being of a Soldier. Conversely, there is also a duty upon Soldiers to weigh keeping something in confidence with reporting vital information to those who may assist. The key example here is in regard to someone expressing suicidal ideations. While it is great that they took the brave step of sharing this information, it is highly important that this information be shared with those who can intervene and work to save this Soldier’s life. The challenge for Soldiers in this area is to use our intelligence as professionals to maintain a balance between what we must share and what we keep in confidence. A way to address issues such as these is to talk with the Soldier who shared with you and agree to go with them as they self-refer to a member of the Chain of Command or to medical personnel.

I have previously highlighted our duty to protect others and this duty includes protecting those within our own ranks who are facing difficulties. It is much easier to witness someone's destructive behavior and turn a blind eye toward their actions than it is to intercede in their life. We may feel as though the way someone else is choosing to live their life is none of our business and to an extent this is true. However, this is not true when the actions of a fellow Soldier, or other individual, endanger life. It is not permissible to know that your friend is planning to drive after drinking a case of beer in a one hour timeframe and allowing this friend to drive for fear of upsetting them by taking their keys. Our duty to our Nation and to each other is to intervene when necessary to save a life. No one knows our friends better than we do and if they are acting in a significantly different manner, saying things that "just don't sound right," or are exhibiting signs of destructive behavior, it is our duty to step into the situation to talk with them and help them find assistance.

Additionally, Soldiers must be honest with those who are having trouble. If someone is exhibiting reckless behavior, they need a true battle-buddy who will tell them the truth versus one who will just stay quiet. It can be very uncomfortable to tell someone what they are doing is wrong or will lead to numerous problems; however, this is exactly what we are all called to do regarding regulations. The old adage states, "a wrong ignored is a wrong condoned" and this holds true in this situation. We as Soldiers are held to a higher standard due to our Profession and as professionals, it is our duty to "police our own." Many times someone who is displaying reckless behavior is doing so either as a cry for attention or help. Instead of ignoring their actions or simply dismissing what they are doing, Professional Soldiers need to take this opportunity to speak the truth to whoever is exhibiting this behavior and assist them in getting whatever help it is that they may need.

Finally, it is important to address the role of self-care within a climate of support. It is very rare to find someone who has not seen the scene from Monty Python and the Holy Grail in which the black knight is continually injured and despite his inability to continue in battle, continues to say, "It's only a flesh wound." While people have laughed at this scene for many years, the reality is that many Soldiers act this same way when it comes to needing assistance. While we may do a great job of telling others to get help when they need it or even assist others in going to receive aid, we often abstain from seeking any sort of assistance until our problem becomes unbearable. It is important to remember that our actions speak much louder than our words and when we fail to get assistance during our times of need we undercut our message regarding the importance of getting timely assistance. Further, we suffer needlessly based on latent misconceptions about receiving help. Just as we emphasize to others the validity of helping personnel and the benefits of proactively getting aid we must take our own advice and get help when we need it.

#### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #4: Teach, Model, and Lead Based on a Balanced Work & Rest Cycle**

A well-known statement that is often overused, but remains very poignant goes, "We must be proactive rather than reactive." We are in a very fluid profession in which emergencies that may well involve life and death decisions do arise. However, it is important for us to realize that not everything is an emergency. An alarm noting incoming fire is a situation that necessitates immediate action. Having to rush to get frequencies loaded and all the "comms" checked at the last minute before going on patrol often stems from an error in backward planning which failed to account for this key task. Rather than merely working for the sake of working or just to try and keep your head above water, timely work not only accomplishes the tasks at hand but also keeps from wasting Soldiers' time. Little is more challenging to a Soldier than spending

the majority of a work day sparingly engaged in activity and then as the day is drawing to a close being given 30 minutes to accomplish 3 hours worth of work prior to being released for the day. In short, good planning and productive work alleviates much of the stress involved in Soldier tasks. There are three vital points to realize regarding balanced work and rest cycles: Self care, Leader responsibilities, and Teamwork.

From the first moments new Soldiers begin working with a protective mask, the importance of donning your protective mask prior to helping others is emphasized. On flights the attendants emphasize the need to place your oxygen mask over your face, should it be needed, prior to helping anyone, including young children, sitting near you. This is not a celebration of a “me first” system in which we are taking care of “number one” and forsaking all others. This standard operating procedure is established because in these situations in order to be able to positively impact those around you whether this is others in a chemical environment or young children on a plane. You must first take steps that will allow you to still be able to function after the initial crises and then take steps to aid others. Our first focus regarding work and rest regards working to the best of our abilities. This means that we give our best effort toward any task we are given even if we do not see its immediate value. This does not involve working like robots without thinking. Throughout the history of the Army, the innovations of Soldiers have led to more efficient ways to do things as well as mission success in the face of extreme challenge. In truth there are some tasks that are not as engaging as others, but the mark of a Professional is the ability to do, even the little things, to a high standard with the best of our abilities.

Conversely, the challenge for all Soldiers is to manage our personal time in order to ensure good work and good rest. We all bear a significant degree of responsibility regarding

how we work and how we rest. If we take pride in our efforts and do a good job, we will accomplish our tasks in good order and be trusted to accomplish what we are assigned. This will garner trust in our abilities and allow us a greater say in regard to ideas and innovations. When we are involved in a task it is important to remain actively engaged in the job. While there may be “down times” awaiting parts, feedback, or the actions of others, we must manage our time in order to put forth our best efforts in support of our Unit’s larger mission. As Professionals, we do not need someone standing directly over us telling us different steps to take or when to move to the next task. We maximize our time and living with integrity when we do not stop work altogether when we hit a “roadblock,” but move on to the next task. Thus, when we are waiting on a part to arrive, we are making phone calls in support of another task on our list. Instead of just sitting around and talking while waiting on a patrol briefing, we are taking the chance to make sure all our gear is “straight.”

Managing “down time” can be very stressful for many Soldiers. After a hard week of work it is very tempting to spend a weekend of hard partying in an attempt to “unwind.” Many times this plan leads to a problem at P.T. on Monday morning when the effects of late nights and numerous drinks preclude top performance. This is an example of poorly managing “down time.” Soldiers do work very hard in a very demanding field, but it is important to be proactive and responsible in managing personal time. Too much of a good thing yields a negative and this is very true of many Soldier activities on the weekend. I am not asserting a need to eliminate all parties or strategies to relax, but I am arguing that it is necessary to remain Professional even while off-duty. This means taking such responsible steps as going out with a battle-buddy, having a designated driver, and planning a weekend’s activities with the knowledge of what the coming week will require. For instance, if you are going to be tasked with spending some late

nights at work, it is probably a good idea to find some time to get sleep over the weekend so that you are not running the risk of falling asleep while on duty.

For Soldiers in leadership positions, proper training of subordinates and balanced planning are absolute necessities. One of the most traumatizing memories I have of basic training occurred when I was tasked to operate a floor buffer while on fire guard. I did not even know what a floor buffer was let alone how to operate one. After a few minutes of failure, much noise, and causing my entire platoon to be awakened, someone else took over this task. While this example is humorous today, it definitely was not funny all those years ago. At issue was my inexperience and lack of knowledge in this area. The larger issue is the fact that no one is an expert at a task from Day 1. Leaders must invest appropriate time in instructing, teaching, and training. A person's inability to perform based on a lack of knowledge is not an indicator of either their worth or their potential. This simply means that they are in need of proper instruction. To respect someone enough to invest the time it takes to train them reflects their value and their potential.

In many areas, our Army is very good at investing training in our Soldiers such as rifle ranges, STX lanes, and the like. A challenge enters today's Army in regard to the fact that there are many skills for which our newest Soldiers, and some of our veterans, are not as well equipped. There are numerous examples of these situations, but a key example here involves the issue of financial management. Our Soldiers are bombarded with opportunities to make purchases on credit or against their paycheck; however, many are ill-equipped to handle these constant solicitations. Excessive debt can cost a Soldier a security clearance as well as lead to a host of other problems. Army Community Services, the Chaplain Corps in conjunction with Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University and the Military Family Life Consultants are all

resources who can instruct Soldiers with regard to debt and financial preparedness. When leaders invest the time to insure their Soldiers are trained, either directly through their instruction or through the use of these helping agencies, the overall Army is benefitted.

The mantle of leadership is an awesome responsibility which challenges a leader to place self interest to the side in order to look out for those under their charge. A key aspect of “Selfless Service” involves investing the time it takes regarding planning and coordination in order to value respect the time belonging to others. As with many other points within these principles, this action may seem self-evident; however, it is necessary that leaders continually choose to value the time of their subordinates. There is often a temptation to delay future planning in order to “take a knee” or to pause and plan at a later time. In truth, proactive planning can lead to more structured rest or “down” time. Of note is the importance of incorporating rest into a Unit’s plan. If there is a good balance of scheduled work and rest and a pretty consistent following of these plans, Soldiers and leaders are more productive. As humans we need some periods of rest and proper planning takes this into account.

Leadership and personal responsibility come together in the challenge to all Soldiers to work as a team. It is interesting to note that when Michael Jordan scored 63 points in a playoff game his team lost. When the Chicago Bulls added other key team members around Jordan, the championships began to pour in. One man, however exceptional, is not a team and cannot do everything. There is a temptation to use top performers to accomplish every task. These Soldiers seem to have greater than average abilities and/or aptitudes and never fail to impress with their performance. One problem that comes to the forefront in this regard is the chance of “burning out” these high performers. A second issue is that constantly assigning tasks to the same personnel prevents others from learning how to accomplish these tasks in the future. A

challenge on the individual level is to either rely unduly on one person who is a “star performer” to do everything or carry everyone else along or, if you are someone who is the “star performer” to try and do everything on your own without the help of others. Our Profession of Arms is a team that requires input from all its members and when we only use a small percentage of our team, overall mission accomplishment is threatened. Initial tasks may be completed to standard but, inevitably, the “stars” will tire or be unable to complete their assigned task and the other Soldiers will be ill-equipped to complete it.

The Army is a team and everyone has their role on this team. It is important for us to “work in our lane” however, it is also very important to work to assist others in order to accomplish the overall mission. Our duty is to the Nation as a whole and not just to feelings of self-satisfaction over individual achievements, but to the overall success of our tasks. There is very little as detrimental to overall Unit cohesion as small groups completing their portion of a task and then sitting around while others struggle to complete their part. Of importance here is to identify the larger mission as the goal rather than focusing on every individual part. Many leaders have experienced the frustration of directing someone to take out the trash only to find out that they took out the trash, but did not replace the trash bag. The subcomponents to the larger mission are all important, but the overall task is not complete until all these parts are complete. It is great if you or your section or your group get your portion of the larger mission completed quickly and fully, but the larger mission is not yet complete. Our job is to complete our tasks and then look to aid those around us. Granted there are some tasks we are able to perform due to technical skill or the like; however, if we can “take something off the plate” of those whose expertise is needed elsewhere, the overall Unit benefits.

Soldiers must have the inner strength to fight for a good work/rest plan for others and for themselves. This does not mean going up to your first-line leaders and asking for some “me time”. This means properly using the time you are given for planning, training, and recovery. With a balanced understanding of the importance of work and rest an understanding that there are appropriate times for both comes to light. Everyone must do their part, however “big” or “small” they perceive it to be, in support of the larger mission; but, there are times when rest must come into the equation.

### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #5: Honor and Value the legacy of those who previously served**

We who currently serve stand on the shoulders of all those who have served before us. The original Hippocratic Oath stated, in part, “To hold him who taught me this art equally dear to me as my parents.” As fellow Professionals, it is vital that we honor and value those who have taught us. As a result, we must learn from them and honor the high standards of conduct they established. This knowledge comes through direct instruction during initial and continuing formalized education, professional readings, learning our Unit histories, and interaction with veterans.

There are two key benefits to knowing our legacy. The first is to know their example in order to replicate it. Instead of merely acting in certain ways out of sheer thoughtless, mindless repetition, when we know what our forebears embodied and why we are able to internalize these patterns of correct action. This also enables us to see the reason behind our Professional actions in order to apply these historic virtues to the contemporary Army. Further, learning their lessons means we do not have to re-learn what is already known. It is much better to believe someone who tells you the stove is hot instead of having to learn this for ourselves and getting burned. The second benefit of knowing our legacy is so that we may honor the commitment of those who

have previously served. When we take their hard earned lessons to heart and apply them to improve our Army today we value their sacrifices and respect their dedicated service.

For over 238 years the Army has established a reputation for Professionalism. Our loyalty is to our Nation and in living up to the high standards of conduct established in the last two-plus centuries. General George Washington was concerned about the poor treatment his troops received when captured by the British who believed the colonials to be subversives subject to criminal action rather than combatants worthy of combatant rights. Yet, he refused to allow captured British troops to be treated with anything but respect. It is this standard of responding to the negative actions of others from a position of “moral high-ground” that has directed the actions of the Army throughout the years of its existence. Our challenge is to respond to negative actions from a logical, ethical position rather than merely responds to a “wrong” with another “wrong.” This action may be very challenging when faced with an enemy who chooses to act in very problematic ways such as targeting civilians or misinformation campaigns. Yet, it is precisely acting from a “higher” position that we must do in order to live up to the high standards set for us by our forbears.

America rightfully expects proper conduct, which exceeds that of the general population, from all of us in uniform. This expectation stems, in part, from the fact that the Nation entrusts us with its protection and grants us authorized lethal powers. This trust is not given lightly and the corresponding expectations of superior conduct are warranted. As Soldiers it is our responsibility to protect those who are in our charge. Further, we are called to be liberators, not oppressors, so our task is to operate based on a higher, professional standard that assists rather than bullies. The men and women who wore our Nation’s uniform in the past gave of themselves in support of the greater good in order to make our country and the world a better

place. Their service is honored when we live up to the challenges to serve our nation and those who are oppressed in the world today.

Our integrity calls all Soldiers to choose the “hard right” over the “easier wrong.” When applied to the principle of honoring the legacy of our forbears causes us to balance our inherited virtues with our contemporary decisions. This additional layer applied to our decision making process does add to the time required to make a decision; however, it is this additional consideration that assists us in insuring that our decisions fall in line with our Profession. Explosions happen rapidly and can be quite damaging. Decisions made in haste often yield explosive results. By placing a type of balance against personal feelings regarding decision making, Soldiers are able to better choose appropriate action rather than reaction.

It is natural to respond to negative actions with negative actions. While this is true, we as Professionals are charged to respond differently. We are charged with balancing our actions with what brings honor to our forbears and to our Nation. Our higher standard of conduct requires us to think before we act. This challenge moves us away from merely reacting to events around us and causes us to balance our possible courses of action with what is expected of us by our Nation and from the examples of those who served previously. Depending on the nature of the issue at hand, we may have a large amount of time to weigh our options and make our decision or it may be an issue that requires a very rapid response such as reacting to enemy contact. In order to facilitate making proper decisions we must know our values as established by those who have served. In so doing, it will be second nature for us to balance our possible courses of action with the actions required by our Profession of Arms.

A final challenge to us as Soldiers is to honor the legacy of those who previously served through raising the moral bar to the next higher rung for those who follow us. To this end, it is

important for Soldiers to balance their actions and decisions with regard to what they do to impact the next generation of Soldier. If we act in a manner that brings honor to ourselves and to our Nation then our actions continue our legacy of professional excellence. A similar rule of thumb is to act in such a way that if our decisions were featured on a news program, they would be viewed as honorable and upright. The decisions of a single Soldier in a village can impact an entire Theater of Operations. Our challenge herein involves acting across all ranks in a manner in which we constantly choose to act responsibly versus acting only out of expedience.

There is an old “commercial” on the Armed Forces Network in which a grandmother is walking on a beach with her grandson. The grandson is bending over, picking up, and throwing starfish back into the sea. The grandmother inquires as to what her grandson is doing to which he replies he is throwing the starfish stranded on the beach back to the safety of the ocean. Her reply questions his ability to make a difference due to the large number of starfish trapped on the beach. Holding up a starfish in his hand, the grandson notes that his action makes a difference to this starfish and then throws it into the sea. While our individual actions may seem very minor in regard to our overall mission, much like the difference made to the individual starfish, our proper actions add to the larger legacy of our professional service. Those who served previously made a difference in our lives and our abilities to serve; we owe it to them and our nation to maintain and augment this legacy.

#### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #6: Promote Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health**

It is paramount for Soldiers to balance their physical fitness with overall well-being. This entails promoting positive physical and mental activities as well as self care. While the Army has historically done a very good job ensuring the physical fitness of Soldiers through its robust physical training, this is in no way all encompassing. As Professionals, Soldiers bear a large

degree of responsibility for their overall welfare sometimes known as total warrior fitness. The Army and our Units provide many resources and opportunities; however, it is still up to the individual to take advantage of these assets for self-care and improvement. It is vital for Soldiers to take advantage of positive support outlets, take personal responsibility for their well-being, and as leaders, to ensure subordinates are promoting their overall health.

It is merely stating the obvious to note that Army life is “challenging.” There are very few vocations in which men and women are asked to place their lives on the line on a regular basis. Numerous separations from loved ones, intensive training, frequent moves, significant responsibilities, and many other stressors permeate the daily existence of Soldiers. A Soldier once commented to me that they would rather go on a 12 mile road march than deal with the stress of preparing the USR (Unit Status Report) for his Battalion. While this is a key report, the stress involved can be significant. In order to complete our missions it is highly important that we balance our whole person.

We are challenged to find positive outlets in order to help us and others deal with job and life stress. Positive outlets are those activities or organizations that assist and build-up Soldiers regarding their whole person as opposed to outlets which, at best, only lead to minor assistance. A positive outlet would be a recreational league while a negative outlet would be turning to a case of beer used to “forget your troubles.” Positive physical outlets may include sports, time with families, or volunteering in support of others. Positive mental outlets are exemplified by such things as working on a degree, taking classes, or reading books to name but a few examples. Positive spiritual outlets involve looking at your own faith expression, participating with like minded people, or even taking the time to focus outside yourself to look at the larger world in which we live. Some of the resources providing support in these areas are Army Community

Services, the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation folks, or your Unit Ministry Teams/Chaplains. Regardless of the manner in which we seek to balance our whole person, it is essential that we find these activities and outlets and participate in them in order to be a more balanced Professional who is able to consistently meet the high demands of our Army's call.

As Soldiers we take an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. Within this document, is a protection for the faith expressions, or lack thereof, of all persons. While we are not called to necessarily agree with the manner in which some Soldiers may seek to promote their spiritual well-being, we are called to both protect and respect their rights to their individual spirituality. While the rights of Soldiers are sometimes temporarily suspended in support of the larger mission such as freedom of speech or certain religious practices, time is to be found for Soldier's free exercise of religion. For instance, it may be desirable for a Soldier to refrain from training on a particular day of the week due to their religious convictions, but if a Unit is under attack, everyone must do their duty rather than be exempted for religious purposes. After the conflict, the Soldier may be afforded the opportunity to address their religious needs.

Soldiers are entitled to their own beliefs and practices within the bounds of Army regulations and mission dictates. It is important to value the energies spent by Soldiers in an attempt to address their spiritual well-being. In so doing, these Soldiers are working on their whole person in an effort to be better able to assist the overall mission. A key part of this issue of respect is that it goes "both ways." What is meant here is both a respect for the person participating in these activities as well as their respect for others who do not chose to express themselves in the same manner.

As stated earlier, the Army provides many avenues for assistance in regard to developing overall well-being. Soldiers will most often have to work during their “down time” in order to more fully develop their whole self. This point was touched upon earlier when I noted the need to do physical activity for stress reduction in addition to regularly scheduled P.T. sessions. This also holds true regarding mental and spiritual well-being. As Professionals we are expected to do what it takes to sharpen and maintain our total warrior skills which include this overall balance in our health. If we are lacking in the ability to run, it is our responsibility to go out and run on our own in order to improve. We may get assistance from our leaders or our peers, but we are ultimately responsible for our physical health. Similarly, we are responsible for finding and utilizing those resources which will enable and equip us to be more balanced Soldiers and people regarding our mental and spiritual dimensions. There may be some time provided during “duty hours” to pursue these endeavors; however, even if there is not, we must continue our Professional development on our own time and work toward balance.

We are all affected by actions, events, and people around us; however, we ultimately bear personal responsibility for our own well-being. I once had a mentor who stated, “No one cares as much about your career as you do.” While this is not a statement regarding doing anything to get ahead or an exclusive focus on self advancement rather than mission it does highlight our need to take responsibility for ourselves. If we are hungry, we do not sit back and wait on someone to bring food to us. Likewise we should not sit back and wait on others to meet our needs regarding any of these three dimensions of total warrior fitness. When Soldiers accept their professional responsibility for self-improvement and well-being, they are able to take the necessary steps to address these areas thereby becoming better Soldiers.

Leaders are called, once again, to place the needs of their subordinates ahead of their own. This does not imply leaders forsaking their own balance of physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions, but calls on leaders to take the time to ensure subordinates are working on developing their own balance. Ensuring this balance involves personally knowing Soldiers and their needs as well as encouraging their work toward balance. This does not mean leaders proselytizing Soldiers to their own physical, mental, or spiritual practices. Leaders are called on to identify and promote resources, provide time, as practicable, and value the positive actions/activities of their subordinates.

We are all aware that actions speak louder than words; hence, our actions in embodying a healthy lifestyle of total warrior fitness say much more to Soldiers than any amount of words. Just as it is hard to believe someone who tells us smoking is bad for our health while they are smoking a cigarette, it is problematic to tell Soldiers to live a life of balance when we fail to live as such. True “honor” in this regard means we live the life we are promoting to others. As leaders this entails supporting the agencies and events that assist our Soldiers. This may include attending some of their recreational competitions to promote this positive outlet. This might also include attending their graduation ceremonies acknowledging to all the importance of this outlet. Further, this may involve working with the Unit Chaplain in order to ensure a specific faith need is addressed. In all these instances, the outward actions of the leader correspond with the stated desire for all Soldiers to work on their whole person. Further, honor comes into play when leaders take the opportunities to address their whole person as well. While this is not done for show or merely as an example for others, the benefits will be evident through the actions and decisions of a “well-balanced” leader.

Our Nation calls us as Soldiers to be more than the average citizen. We are called to conduct ourselves and act in ways that adhere to a higher moral standard than what is commonly expected. Further, we are called upon to do this in situations which, quite often, are extremely challenging and may be life threatening. In dealing with these situations it is extremely important that we maintain a balance between our physical, mental, and spiritual selves in order to maintain our ability to function and our ability to deal with multifaceted stress and situations in a positive manner. With a good balance in these three areas, Soldiers are able to be more resilient in dealing with the complexities and adhere to the high standards of our Profession of Arms.

#### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #7: Promote Positive Interpersonal Relationships**

Human beings are social creatures who rely on interpersonal relationships ranging from family and friendships to Unit cohesion. These relationships may be romantic, professional, or simple interactions based on living in a society. To this end, it is of vital importance that we, as Professionals, promote positive relationships and interaction with our fellow Soldiers, their families, and civilians. Further, as human beings it is key for us to interact with others in order to work better as a team and find more fulfillment in life.

From the most junior Soldier to the most senior leader, the Army emphasizes teamwork. Even Commanders will commonly refer to the Command Sergeant Major as their “battle-buddy” and everyone in uniform is accountable to and for someone else. It is this emphasis on teamwork and mutual dependence that highlights interpersonal relationships on the professional level.

Although our romantic relationships are separate from our “work,” these relationships may impact our performance as Soldiers either positively or negatively. As Professionals, we owe it to our fellow Soldiers to respect those who are significant to them on a romantic level.

Here, as in other places, we are not called to blindly condone any and all actions with which we may disagree; however, we must respect our fellow Soldier and those they hold dear.

It has been said that life is a “team sport” and this means living with positive relationships.

Relationships do not merely mean romantic encounters, but encompass the whole of interaction between humans. We have a relationship with the clerk at a checkout. This relationship is not romantic, but is about commerce. We have a relationship with our squad members, again not romantic, but professional. To this end we must note that all relationships are to be appropriate. Relationships must not be coercive, manipulative, or destructive, but should enhance humanity or Unit cohesion.

Along the same lines as the total warrior fitness concept discussed earlier, healthy relationships aid Soldiers in regard to their overall well-being. Accordingly we should encourage positive interpersonal relationships in order to support the Army’s larger mission. One key step we can take to accomplish this goal is to assist new Soldiers in becoming an integral part of our Unit. This opens the door to them for numerous helping outlets, allows them to feel like they are truly part of the team, and fulfills their innate desire for interpersonal interaction. It can be very challenging for new Soldiers to integrate into a Unit and there is often a natural hesitancy among Unit members to welcome someone new onto the team. Our call as Professionals directs us to foster these relationships in a positive manner in order to facilitate accomplishment of our higher charge.

On a personal level, it is sometimes hard to trust others especially if we have had significant challenges in our life prior to the Army. However, when we withhold our trust from others, we find ourselves in a position where we have to deal with the challenges, struggles, and even successes of life on our own. A life lived apart from others greatly reduces our resources

for assistance and greatly decreases our ability to be resilient when dealing with troubling events. Our duty as Professionals is to intentionally work to value active friendships and work as a member of a team. It is much easier to move 500 sandbags with a truck and a detail than it is to try and do this by ourselves. As an old adage states, “Many hands make light work.” This holds true in regard to dealing with the challenges of Army life. When we actively seek to be a member of a team and have positive interpersonal relationships, we will be more successful, more fulfilled, and better able to accomplish our assigned tasks in the near and long terms.

As Soldiers we must value the interpersonal commitments of others as well as support positive patterns of interpersonal conduct. This means that we give positive reinforcement to those who are good team members and acknowledge positive contributions to the Unit. This also means that we do not condone negative or inappropriate interpersonal interactions. We must never value or reinforce someone’s actions if they are merely using people as a means to an ends. If someone is engaging in casual relationships simply for their own self-gratification to the detriment of others we must emphasize the need to respect and value all people for who they are not what they can do for this person. To be blunt, if someone is engaging in a string of questionable intimate relationships through misrepresentation, deceit, or simply “using” others, this does not live up to the code of our Profession. It is sometimes tempting for Soldiers to live vicariously through someone who is conducting their life in a destructive pattern. Rather than seeking a thrill in this regard, it is our job as Soldiers to hold one another to a higher standard.

Another vital aspect of promoting positive interpersonal relationships deals with the importance of respect regarding the importance of appropriate actions, mannerisms, and tolerance. A Professional will not discriminate against other people based on their gender, mannerisms, culture, handicap, age, intelligence, race, or other natural characteristics.

Discrimination destroys interpersonal relationships and replaces teamwork with discord. Professionals will also always carry themselves in such a manner as to refrain from any intentionally inappropriate actions. While Soldiers in a new cultural environment may unintentionally act in a manner that offends the locals, they will take actions to remedy this offense. However, at no time will Soldiers intentionally act in a manner that reduces someone else to a punch line instead of a person of value and worth. Further Soldiers do not devalue others through the use of derogatory speech or harassment. Instead, Soldiers seek to show proper respect to others in their words, mannerisms, and actions.

Finally, we are charged with helping others. A challenge herein is the call to put self interest aside in order to help those who are in need. This call to “Selfless Service” applies to the principle of promoting positive interpersonal relationships through intervening to help other people. It is much easier to ignore a need or someone in peril than it is to work to remedy their situation. Within the Profession of Arms, we are called to step into helping relationships with others in order to help them. A perfect example of this occurred in the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan in 2010. Our Unit’s Command Sergeant Major witnessed a local’s truck stuck in the mud at a water crossing. Rather than drive past and leave the Afghans to solve their own problem, he stopped and assisted them in getting their vehicle through the crossing. This action did not turn the tide of public sentiment, but it did show the kind of character American Soldiers are to display.

As with many things in life and the Army, we bear the ultimate responsibility for our interpersonal interactions. To this end it is vital that we are willing to reach out to others in order to facilitate interpersonal relationships. It can be very challenging to be the new person in a Unit

and not know anyone. Rather than wait on others to interact with us, we are challenged to have the courage to risk establishing interpersonal relationships with others.

Interpersonal relationships are of the utmost importance in our current military environment. Units are increasingly partnered with host nation forces where the lives of Americans and their partners may be in the balance. In these situations, it is extremely important to foster positive relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. It can be very challenging when language serves as a barrier, but there are numerous instances in which Soldiers and their counterparts have developed a very positive relationship yielding positive mission results. This does not happen by chance. It takes intentionality on the part of Command and Soldier alike; yet, this is what we, as Professionals, are called to do overseas and in garrison.

#### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #8: Respect the Possessions of Others**

By the nature of our profession, Soldiers are required to live in very close proximity to one another. While garrison life yields time apart on off-duty hours, on a field exercise or deployment, Soldiers are in close proximity to one another 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In order to successfully operate in such close quarters it is imperative that Soldiers respect those things which belong to others. These possessions include personal space, personal areas, and opinions. In addition to respecting these possessions of other Soldiers, we are also called to expand our respect to other areas. The first additional level of respect involves respecting the possessions of those who are not Soldiers. This includes civilians in the U.S. and abroad as well as villagers we encounter on deployments. The second additional level regarding the possessions of others involves the charge placed on us by our Nation regarding the oversight of government equipment and monies.

Our initial task is to protect what belongs to someone else. This involves actively preventing theft and not just ignoring possible wrongs. When Soldiers spend a portion of their time looking out for each other, the level of trust among them expands. Soldiers realize that their focus does not have to stay on themselves and their possessions, but develop a trust in those to their left and right knowing that they are helping to protect their possessions as well. When the focus turns from self to others true team unity flourishes.

We owe it to our fellow Soldiers to respect their rights to privacy and some degree of personal space. Though we may live in tight quarters on a deployment, giving someone else the common courtesy to respect their area and their possessions goes a long way in establishing trust and enhancing mission accomplishment. Further, just because we are all in close proximity it does not mean that if another Soldier has something that we want lying in their area that we can just arbitrarily take it without permission. In truth, if someone leaves something in the open that could serve to tempt others to take it, it is our duty to help ensure that their possessions are protected.

One of the most challenging areas in which we are called to respect the possessions of others is in regard to our usage of time. We previously talked about maintaining a proper balance of work and rest; yet, when this is out of balance there is a lure of trying to create our own compensation time. This is often done by taking longer than necessary on a smoke break, taking longer to run an errand, or purposely delaying completing a task because we believe that after it is complete we will just be given more work. As Professionals we have a significant degree of control over what we do and how we do it. Yes, junior Soldiers do not seem to have the same level of flexibility as more senior personnel; however, there are instances throughout the day when Soldiers of all ranks can choose to put forth more, less, or the same amount of

effort in accomplishing a task. When we delay a project or purposely take longer than needed to accomplish an assignment we are stealing time. A better course of action is to work on our work and rest plans in order to ensure they are sufficient. This will eliminate the feeling of having to “make up” down time which was lost due to supposed poor planning. While this is being addressed, it is our responsibility as Professionals to give of our best efforts in a timely fashion regardless of our personal feelings. When we fail to give our best effort or take longer away from our tasks, we are “robbing” others of their time and abilities to compensate for what we are not getting done.

It is highly important that we remember our Army is established as an instrument of liberation, protection, and freedom, we exist not to conquer but to free those who are oppressed. As we keep this in mind, it is very important we remember that just because we may have need of something, we do not have the right to arbitrarily take it. If you will, “might does not equal right.” We are challenged to respect the property and possession of others even in a warzone. There are times of emergency need, such as having to use a cart for protection from fire; however, this is different than merely taking something that does not belong to us just because we desire it. When we take that which does not belong to us it harms both the one who takes it and the relations with the one to whom it belonged. If a Soldier randomly takes things which do not belong to him or her, they have entered a “slippery slope” regarding where to now draw the line on acquiring things that they may want but that belong to someone else. The relations with the rightful owner, and possibly the entire village, will most definitely become strained if there is an incidence of thievery due to mistrust and ill feelings directed toward “conquerors” rather than “liberators.”

On the modern battlefield money has become a weapons system. Funds can be used to assist “friendly” locals, they can be used to obtain information, they can also greatly assist infrastructure, to name but a few examples. Into this arena, our principle of respecting the possessions of others highlights the need to be responsible in both accounting for and using this money. There have been numerous instances when Soldiers with access to large amounts of money have falling victim to the allure of taking it for themselves. It is important to maintain proper records of this money, develop a “check and balance” system with regard to this money, and to make sure that all the proper paperwork is being filed. To be entrusted by our government with large amounts of money is a decided honor; however, it brings with it the need to pay extra attention to its proper use based on our professional virtues.

Our Nation expects us to be good stewards of our national resources. In other words, it is imperative that we take care of any and all government equipment under our charge. It is tempting to view the Nation as a bottomless pit of money in which we can always get any resource that we need. Regrettably this is not the case. All resources are finite and it is vital that we do our part as responsible overseers of our equipment and money. Though we may only be responsible for a very small amount of funds or equipment, as previously addressed, every little action done toward the larger good adds up.

Very few people intentionally set out to take things that do not belong to them. Rather, as noted above, there are some instances when everyone is tempted to cut corners. These may be taking what we are sure our battle-buddy would not mind giving us even though we did not ask them for it or giving ourselves some “comp” time. However minor these events may seem, they are still taking something that is not ours. This holds particularly true in regard to dealing with host country nationals while deployed. As we work to develop a positive relationship with them

it is important that it is not undercut by petty theft. As we well know, our Profession calls on us to operate based on a higher moral standard than simply taking what we want just because we can take it.

### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #9: Operate Honestly in Words & Actions**

The honor code of cadets at the United States Military Academy includes the statement, “A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.” This call extends beyond our cadets into the whole of our Profession of Arms in regard to proper conduct and honesty. In the Army a lack of honesty or even a half-truth can lead to death. If a Unit reports the wrong location to their higher headquarters both lethal and non-lethal support to this Unit may be negatively impacted. On the individual Soldier level, honesty in word and deed establishes trust among Soldiers and leaders and facilitates mission accomplishment.

Loyalty and trust go hand-in-hand. A dishonest person will not be loyal; hence, no one trusts a liar. This lesson is taught in preschool to children with the story of “The Boy Who Cried Wolf.” The child lies and is not trusted. If Soldiers cannot trust one another missions will fail. As a result it is extremely important that Soldiers speak and act truthfully. When our peers, our leaders, and our subordinates know that what we say is truthful, they may not enjoy the truth, but they will know that we are being honest. An example in this area would be a leader informing their Soldiers at their P.T. formation that they will be going home early. If this is perpetually promised and never occurs due to changes in mission, the Soldiers will no longer believe the promise of an early day. If, on-the-other-hand, this leader tells the Soldiers they will have to stay later at the end of the duty day, they will not enjoy the news, but will appreciate the honesty which will further develop trust.

As Professionals we are called to tell Commanders the facts, what they need to hear not just what they want to hear. This must be done respectfully, but Commanders make life and death decisions and must have accurate, truthful information in order to Command. While no one likes bad news, it is our job as Soldiers to present our leaders with the accurate details. This value causes all Soldiers to refrain from being “yes men” and to present the facts. When Commanders are able to get an accurate picture of what is happening and what needs to be done, they can make the appropriate decisions. Conversely, if they are only told partial information poor decisions can follow and a lack of trust becomes prevalent.

In order for Soldiers to operate as an effective team honesty must be established throughout their Unit. A portion of this trust comes in the form of respect for one another in that Soldiers will be honest with each other. For us to truly trust one another we must be able to be honest with each other. True honesty is not hostile or attempts to insult those around us, but is about working to help one another through holding each other accountable to our Professional Standards. A good example of being honest with one another is when a Soldier will make someone aware of a uniform violation, such as misaligned name tags, in order to correct the deficiency. This is an example of working together to uphold our higher standard. It is not malicious, but is intended to bring about the appropriate action. When we know we can trust those around us to hold us accountable to our shared standards through honest feedback, our trust level rises which leads to improved Unit cohesion.

Though we are Professionals we are still human and will still make mistakes. Our challenge is to speak the truth to others and to ourselves. While this may be uncomfortable, it is our job in this arena to work to make things better. This means that if the truth is different from what is required, we must work to make things better. An example herein is that if we have to let

the Commander know that all the vehicles have not been PMCS'd then we do not stop there, but take the steps necessary to get these vehicles PMCS'd. When we take the steps to remedy deficiencies commanders will appreciate our honesty and will further trust that we will get the job done. This will greatly reduce the anxiety associated with sharing negative news and will build trust in our abilities.

We are called to be examples of the best of our Nation, and as such we must adhere to a high standard of honor which entails our being counted on to be truthful and honest in words and actions. When ordinary Americans see a Soldier they should know that we epitomize honesty and honorable character. This is a challenge for all of us in that any negative actions on the part of one or but a few Soldiers gravely impacts public opinion regarding us all. There is often a thin line between what we are able to share with the larger populace and what we must retain based on operational security. Regrettably the general public often views silence on an issue as an admission of guilt or an attempted cover-up. To this end it is very important that we work closely with our Public Affairs personnel in order to both know what we are able to say and how best to share our stories. In so doing, we are able to convey to the public our honesty in action and give them an understanding of whatever events may have happened.

Soldiers are tasked with ensuring that their actions remain trustworthy whether they are in garrison or deployed. Yet again we note that actions speak much louder than words. If our actions do not reflect integrity or honesty no amount of words can counter the opinions others develop about us. We act with honesty when we follow through with what we say, treat others with respect, and embody the Professionals standards we profess. Standards are standards whether we are in garrison or are on a deployment. It is important to remember the old Army adage, "A wrong ignored is a wrong condoned." If we fail to live up to our standards, we

establish a pattern of flexible standards which leads to confusion and laxity within the ranks.

When Soldiers act in an honest manner, adhering to our standards in word and deed, our service paints a picture of Professional integrity.

We are further challenged to intervene where we see a wrong or note actions that are not reflective of our Professional code. This is should be done respectfully out of a desire to correct a wrong rather than attacking the person committing it. However, we must not be so accommodating or afraid to “rock the boat” that we allow bad things to happen. It has often been said, “That evil prevails where good is silent.” Regrettably, there are numerous examples where some misguided Soldiers have carried out some very negative actions thereby causing suffering, poor host country relations, and ill-will from the general public. In working to prevent these negative events from occurring, we must do our part to ensure honesty in words and actions and an adherence to our standards in the minor as well as the major things.

Soldiers must act honestly in word and deed in order to complete our missions. Our fellow Soldiers must be able count on us to follow through on what we tell them. They must also be able to trust that our actions will be forthright. Leaders have to know that they will receive and honest assessment from us when we report to them regardless of whether the news is good or bad.

An old story tells of two men paddling across a lake in a boat. About halfway across the lake, one of the men stops paddling, pulls out a drill, and starts drilling holes in the bottom of the boat. Needless to say the other man was greatly concerned and asked what the first man was doing and why. The response he received did little to ease his worry, “Don’t worry about it, these holes won’t affect you, they’re under my seat.” Of course this man’s actions impacted him and the other man on the boat. Just as it is important for us to embody the standards of our

Profession, it is also highly important that we work to ensure those around us are exemplifying our standards as well because their actions impact us as well.

### **Virtues of a Professional Soldier #10: Thrive in Your Location and Capacity**

The nature of our Profession requires a wide variety of assignments, positions, locations, and tasks. It is only natural to have opinions and feelings regarding these postings and our anticipated postings. What is vital is that we give our best effort and energies in the capacity to which we are assigned. Fundamentally, we must always give of our best in support of the larger mission and our current Unit. Honestly, it is very hard to give of your best to your current command if you are constantly looking forward to your next assignment or Unit. Additionally it is hard to give your best in your area if envious of someone else's assignment. Again, all roles are important and we must remember this truism in order to fulfill our professional calling.

General, later President, Dwight D. Eisenhower is an excellent example of doing your best in whatever capacity you serve. Instead of having the opportunity to serve in combat in World War I, he was tasked with instructing officers and then assisting to ready a tank corps. Shortly after the war's end, his rank of Lieutenant Colonel was returned to its pre-war level; yet, Eisenhower continued to give his best in service to the Nation. Other assignments and postings were not what Eisenhower would have chosen for himself, but through learning in all his varying positions and performing at a high level, he became the general who led our forces to victory in Europe. Eisenhower was human and most definitely would have experienced feelings of frustration at some of his assignments, but he still did his best. This is our example today as we work to thrive in the areas in which we are called to serve.

For a team to be successful, all its members must do their job and support their overall goal. In order to achieve the aims of our Nation, Soldiers must be loyal to their Unit and their

command. This is not blind allegiance which would overlook mistakes, but is a commitment to support the Unit to which you are assigned through your actions and your attitude. Additionally this entails doing all within your power to make your Unit a better place.

In thriving within our varying capacities we are tasked with doing our duty to its fullest. We fulfill our obligations to support our mission and to demonstrate our abilities as Professionals. This means we neither take short cuts nor undercut others to get ahead. Instead, we do our best and value the contributions of others, even if they have the role or position that we would prefer.

Our Profession of Arms has an established structure of rank and duty position. Within this structure other factors sometimes do not carry the same amount of “weight” as they do in other arenas. The simplest example is that a 22 year-old Lieutenant will likely find him or herself in charge of a platoon with a 28 year-old Sergeant First Class. In most job situations, the older person is in charge of the younger due to age and experience on the job. With our rank structure, the onus is upon the Lieutenant. (Of course a wise Lieutenant will heed the advice and input of their Non-commissioned Officers.) In the Army it is essential that we give proper respect and support to our leaders regardless of any other factors including rank or experience.

In order to succeed in whatever role we are assigned we must continually go the extra mile to make our Unit better. While this does not mean sacrificing a balanced work/rest plan it does mean that as Professionals, we are to be about more than just “punching a time clock.” Our challenge is to give our best effort and to assist those to our left and right in accomplishing their part of the mission.

We are called to be people who give 100% in all areas and respects. This means that though there may be days we do not “feel like it” we still give our all out of our sincere

adherence to our Professional standards. We are to give our full faith effort to assignments we relish as well as those we find to be beneath us, a waste of time, or demeaning. There are many times we do not know the larger picture and often the tasks we are given a part of this larger picture. As a result, it is important that we give our best efforts toward completing the intent and the directives of all our jobs.

Further, as Professionals we must continually work on self-improvement. This includes formal blocks of instruction as well as learning through reading, practice, and on-line instruction. It has been said that life is like walking up a down escalator in that if we stop walking up, we will go down. This holds true regarding learning and enhanced job performance. With rapidly changing tactics and technology, it is highly important that we continue to learn throughout our careers.

Being social creatures it is often easy to find ourselves going along with what other people are saying or doing. While this can generally be alright, it is important to ensure that we are not forsaking our dignity or our Unit. As Professionals, we must refrain from negativity which undercuts trust and Unit cohesion. Instead, we must strive to promote a positive work environment and work to make it better. It is crucial to remember that anyone can complain, but only a professional will do something to improve the overall situation.

Soldiers are promoted based on their potential for increased responsibility. A key to noting a Soldiers' potential is through viewing how they perform, how they handle various situations and circumstances, and their attitude. When we do our best wherever we find ourselves, we demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be professional which speaks volumes about our potential.

## Part II: The Seven Army Values Applied to the Virtues of a Professional Soldier

TABLE 2: The Seven Army Values

### Loyalty

Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other Soldiers. Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. A loyal Soldier is one who supports the leadership and stands up for fellow Soldiers. By wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army you are expressing your loyalty. And by doing your share, you show your loyalty to your unit.

### Duty

Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish tasks as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks and responsibilities — all in constant motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. You fulfill your obligations as a part of your unit every time you resist the temptation to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.

### Respect

Treat people as they should be treated. In the Soldier’s Code, we pledge to “treat others with dignity and respect while expecting others to do the same.” Respect is what allows us to appreciate the best in other people. Respect is trusting that all people have done their jobs and fulfilled their duty. And self-respect is a vital ingredient with the Army value of respect, which results from knowing you have put forth your best effort. The Army is one team and each of us has something to contribute.

### Selfless Service

Put the welfare of the nation, the Army and your subordinates before your own. Selfless service is larger than just one person. In serving your country, you are doing your duty loyally without thought of recognition or gain. The basic building block of selfless service is the commitment of each team member to go a little further, endure a little longer, and look a little closer to see how he or she can add to the effort.

### Honor

Live up to Army values. The nation’s highest military award is The Medal of Honor. This award goes to Soldiers who make honor a matter of daily living — Soldiers who develop the habit of being honorable, and solidify that habit with every value choice they make. Honor is a matter of carrying out, acting, and living the values of respect, duty, loyalty, selfless service, integrity and personal courage in everything you do.

## Integrity

Do what's right, legally and morally. Integrity is a quality you develop by adhering to moral principles. It requires that you do and say nothing that deceives others. As your integrity grows, so does the trust others place in you. The more choices you make based on integrity, the more this highly prized value will affect your relationships with family and friends, and, finally, the fundamental acceptance of yourself.

## Personal Courage

Face fear, danger or adversity (physical or moral). Personal courage has long been associated with our Army. With physical courage, it is a matter of enduring physical duress and at times risking personal safety. Facing moral fear or adversity may be a long, slow process of continuing forward on the right path, especially if taking those actions is not popular with others. You can build your personal courage by daily standing up for and acting upon the things that you know are honorable

Source: The Army Values from [www.army.mil/values](http://www.army.mil/values)

## **The Army Values and How They Strengthen These Ethical Principles**

Our Seven Army Values are quite prevalent within the supporting paragraphs for the Ten Virtues of a Professional Soldier. In truth, these Ten Virtues serve to guide the implementation of the Army Values in the daily lives of servicemen and women. Realistic situations are often far removed from textbook examples, however, these virtues in conjunction with our Army Values unite to provide a template for conduct within our dynamic profession.

We begin with the Army Value of "Loyalty." This value highlights the charge for Soldiers to be 100% committed to our Nation and one another. This calling is evidenced throughout the Virtues of a Professional Soldier. Loyalty involves respecting those around us, offering them support, honoring those who have given to our Nation, and doing our best in response to our commitment to the Constitution. The level of loyalty that Soldiers have for one another is perhaps no stronger evidenced than after the passing of a fellow Soldier. During many of the Ramp Ceremonies I conducted while in Afghanistan I was amazed and humbled to witness wounded Soldiers being taken aboard the transport plane for the ceremony in order to pay their last respects to their fallen brother. These men were part of the same engagement which took the life of their fellow Soldier and in many cases were receiving significant medical care; however, out of loyalty, they made it to the ceremony in order to honor their friend. It is loyalty such as this that is often beyond words because it is internalized by our Soldiers. This same internalization is called upon for all our Army Values.

When we look at the value of "Duty," we encounter the mandate to give of our best efforts as part of a team. At numerous times, this value is highlighted within the Virtues of a Professional Soldier. We are to work as a team toward mission accomplishment, adhering to standards, and helping those who are in need. An excellent contemporary example of Soldiers'

commitment to "Duty" is evidenced in the outstanding work of our Female Engagement Teams. These Soldiers are asked to perform missions outside their specialized area of training in order to make a difference on the tactical and strategic levels. Our servicewomen who perform these tasks reach a vital part of the community, the females, with whom infantrymen are not culturally allowed to encounter. The amount of information and good-will these female engagement teams have acquired has been amazing. Their service speaks volumes to the value of "Duty" in that they accomplish more than their MOS tasks require through working as a team in a completely different mode of service. Further, these activities speak volumes about the flexibility of Soldiers in order to work with others and complete enormous tasks.

The Army Value of "Respect" highlights our treatment of others. In our larger society, there is currently much emphasis on bullies and bullying. These actions are in stark contrast to the ideals of our Profession of Arms. We are called to respect all persons regardless of their attitudes or actions toward us. I was a firsthand witness to a young Soldier's loyalty to our Nation and its citizens in early 2003. My Chaplain Assistant and I were travelling to a hospital to support a Soldier who had a premature child which was expected to pass away. Due to our travel plan's rest cycle, we stopped at a McDonalds for breakfast. As we were about to leave my Assistant was detained by an elderly gentleman at a table near the doorway. It seems this gentleman had been drafted in support of the Korean War and harbored quite a bit of anger toward the military. Seeing my assistant in his uniform stirred feelings within this man which he could not contain leading to his outburst. Instead of responding to harsh words with harsh words, my assistant remained respectful, listened to this man's story, and thanked him for his previous service in time of war. This young Soldier exhibited the qualities of a Professional Soldier by taking the moral high ground in this situation. He showed respect for both himself

and this angry gentleman and his actions in front of a dining room full of civilians displayed the high standards of all Soldiers in regard to interpersonal interactions. His loyalty to our Nation and the call it had placed upon him, turned what could have been a very negative situation into one of quiet professionalism.

As we look at "Selfless Service" we note the edict to put self interest aside in support of the larger mission. The Virtues of a Professional Soldier consistently emphasize this important value. This is evidenced in tolerance, respect, support and care for others, as well as honesty in word and deed. The very act that a man or woman is serving in the Army is immediately an indicator of their selfless service because it demonstrates their willingness to give their all in support of our Nation. Another key example of selfless service occurred between two Specialists in a barracks almost a decade ago. A young Specialist was preparing to go out and enjoy his "free time" with some of his friends when he noticed something amiss inside a neighboring barracks room whose door was open. Despite his desire to go on about his business and not get involved with what might be happening, he chose to check things out. To make a long story short, this Specialist encountered a peer who was having a very difficult time and had reached a breaking point on the verge of suicide. This Specialist immediately engaged this Soldier, got Command involved, and assisted in getting this Soldier to help. In short, he saved a life through his willingness to give up some of his own time in order to help someone else out. As a result of his selfless service he ended up missing a night out on the town, but he also ended up saving a life. Issues of life and death are not the only levels of selfless service to which Soldiers are called, but their willingness to assist to this level is what is asked of all Professionals.

"Honor" entails the personification of all our Army Values. This is taking these values from a poster or a page and putting them into practice. The intent of the Virtues of a Professional

Soldier is to facilitate this embodiment and response. Whether Soldiers act in honor while supporting each other or in regard to our treatment of third country nationals, this behavior is a true measure of our character. The epitome of honor occurred during the Week of the Eagles on Fort Campbell in August 2009. At this time the 502nd Regiment was able to coordinate the travel and lectures of four Regimental members who had parachuted into France in support of Operation Overlord (D-Day). Every current Soldier had the opportunity to meet with these veterans and attend gatherings where these heroes shared their experiences. They shared their honest feelings and experiences and greatly touched the lives of our young Soldiers. After one such session, a young Soldier excitedly shared with me, "Chaplain, this was awesome! This is the first time I've ever met anyone from World War Two and these guys are great." What made these men "great" was their sharing of similar feelings, thoughts, and experiences which transcended the decades from one set of warriors to the next. As they shared their common experience, their message of serving the larger good and living lives of honor hit home in the minds and actions of each Soldier.

The value of "Integrity" involves being trustworthy and forthright. It also asks Soldiers to go the extra mile in doing the right thing. This encompasses the whole Soldier regarding respect, support, actions, and attitudes. We exhibit "integrity" when we go beyond what is normally expected and operate out of a higher moral standard which reflects the best of our Nation. A perfect example of acting with integrity occurred in Iraq in the 2008. While working as the interim Chaplain for a Combat Support Hospital, I responded, along with the rest of the trauma staff, to a MEDEVAC flight bringing in a suspected insurgent. The details surrounding this man's injury and capture painted a very damning picture of his being a part of the insurgency; however, he was currently in dire need of medical attention. The medical staff

displayed an amazing level of integrity through the valiant efforts they made to save his life. They treated him as they would any American Soldier and were able to save his life. Afterward, the staff did not seem to believe this act was overly significant because it was simply the way they did things. They consistently provided world-class medical care to everyone regardless of the situation or circumstance. While there are assuredly feelings of concern over helping someone who was trying to take the lives of American Soldiers, these medical personnel still gave their all because it was simply the right thing to do; hence, the epitome of integrity.

Soldiers consistently demonstrate “Personal Courage” on the battlefield. Even in the midst of mortal danger, Soldiers perpetually accomplish their missions. This Value is definitely required of Soldiers in lethal situations; however, the call to courage is made in everyday life. The Virtues of a Professional Soldier reflect this requirement in areas such as standing up for those who are on the fringes of society, speaking out for a balance of work and rest for subordinates and the courage it sometimes takes to tell the truth to name but a few examples. It is important to remember that this value holds true for noncombat environments as well as in combat itself. In regard to personal courage in combat I am reminded of a picture I received featuring one of the Chaplains I supervised providing ministry in the Arghandab Valley of Afghanistan during our deployment there in 2010-2011. This picture featured a young Chaplain providing support to a wounded Soldier. Of significance, this Chaplain was wounded himself. He was helping to move wounded to cover when he was injured, but continued to help others before and after he was treated for his wounds. He placed personal comfort aside to aid others in the midst of enemy fire. He was not alone in performing these actions thereby reflecting the high quality of some of our Nation’s young men displaying personal courage to do the right thing and respond appropriately in the midst of a life and death situation.

In this section and in these examples we have seen how the Virtues of a Professional Soldier supplement the Seven Army Values. These virtues provide a directed focus through which the Army Values are better able to be understood and implemented across the Army spectrum. Again, reality is often much more challenging than the answers provided by a poster or a sign; however, internalization of these virtues will help Soldiers achieve our Nation's goals through living and acting based upon a higher ethical standard.

### **CONCLUSION: Our Way Ahead**

“Actions speak louder than words.”

Never has this old axiom been more true than in the current operational environment in which the Army finds itself today. Numerous news reports highlight the ethical failings of senior leaders in issues ranging from sexual harassment to the perception of partiality toward persons of rank. Perhaps nothing undermines a meritocracy as much as this perception that “rank has its privileges” which includes being “above the law.” One need only look at the comments by Soldiers and civilians that follow these articles to note the sense of frustration the “led” have for these “leaders” who have stumbled. What I propose is not something new, but takes elements from both ADP 6-22 and ADRP 6-22 and places them in a “user-friendly” format for the purpose of Embodiment, Education, and Emphasis.

### **Embodiment**

Our first step as members of the Army is to embody those virtues we wish to apply to our profession. Our own Army Doctrine highlights the importance of embodying our Professional Ethic. In ADRP 6-22 highlights a key role of leadership as “Influencing,”

Influencing is getting people—military and civilian, governmental and non-governmental partners, or even bystanders such as a local populace—to do

what is required. Influencing entails more than simply passing along orders. Through words and personal example, leaders communicate purpose, direction, and motivation. (ADRP 6-22, 1-1)

A key here is “through words and personal example.” What we do must correspond to what we say and vice versa. In Army Doctrinal Publication 6-22 we note,

“An Army Leader is anyone who by virtue of assumed role of assigned responsibility inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals. Army leaders motivate people both inside and outside the chain of command to pursue actions, focus thinking and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization. (ADP 6-22, 1)

In this we find our imperative to act in a “right” manner; “...to pursue actions, focus thinking and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization.” It is not just about us, but it is about us internalizing what we must do in order to make our institution the best that is can be.

The first step to embodiment is to actually believe in what we are about as an Army. In the Army we have numerous battle drills which train Soldiers on certain tasks such as how to assault a position or how to cross open terrain. These drills provide guidance, training points, and measures to determine success; however, they also encompass a degree of flexibility which enables the commander on the ground to adjust to any number of variables. These drills are a combination of past experiences, best practices, and a means to attain the desired goal. While a Soldier may have a different idea of how they would handle a tactical situation, they place their initiative and ideas within the parameters of the existing battle drills. This is the case behind working within the Army’s Professional structure to achieve the larger goal of our organization.

We believe “in” and then we and act “upon” the guidelines of our Army. This is our second step in embodiment. Within these parameters, we are given flexibility for initiative

and innovation, but we still operate within these parameters. ADRP 6-22 emphasizes, “To succeed and create true commitment, subordinates should perceive influencing methods as authentic and sincere.” (ADRP 6-22, 6-15) Embodiment means just that we must sincerely exemplify the Army virtues. There is no room for a “do as I say, not as I do” mindset. Others will not adhere to aspirations we undercut through half-hearted acceptance or action. For the Army to be successful, we must embrace the “Be-Know-Do” mindset in regard to this standard of conduct and action.

### **Education**

To continue with the battle drill example for a moment, a Soldier does not know how to complete these until he or she is trained on them. The same holds true for the components of our Army’s standards of conduct, i.e. our Virtues of a Professional Soldier. This education needs to be more than just slogans or posters or acrostic. Further, this education cannot be an annual or semi-annual task. There does need to be instruction to present what these 10 Virtues are; however, these Virtues are embedded within the Army Leadership publications. To truly be embraced across the Army spectrum, this training must occur as part of a Soldier’s daily life. While there may be a temptation to recite these 10 Virtues over and over until they are memorized and rote, a more effective learning method is to embrace the Aristotelian aspect of these virtues and highlight what “a good Soldier (a Professional Soldier) does.” People have a natural desire to be part of something larger than their individual self. In striving to be part of a larger whole, people want to know what this means and what it entails. (How does someone who is “X” act and respond in differing situations?) Effective education regarding the Virtues of a Professional Soldier highlights what it means to be one. For example, a PT session may be centered on Virtue

#6: Promote Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health. Standard physical exercises may be combined with mental challenges as well as varied activities, coordinated through a Chaplain to ensure appropriate Religious sensitivity, regarding spiritual expression. Another example would be acknowledging the positive contributions and historical figures of a unit prior to the start of weapons qualification on a range. This training does not have to be long or overly formal, merely times when these virtues are highlighted and Soldiers develop a better understanding of what it means to be “a good Soldier.”

### **Emphasis**

Rather than viewing Embodiment, Education, and Emphasis as separate steps in achieving our desired “end state,” the reality is that these components directly work together. This is all the more true regarding “Emphasis.” While providing educational opportunities, how much better to highlight and acknowledge those within the ranks who are “doing it right.” As much as we can highlight the amazing virtues of a Soldier in battle, we can also highlight the Soldier who just completed her Associate’s Degree or the Soldier who just tallied a year of volunteering as a Big Brother. In the former case, elements of Virtues 6 and 10 are brought together through this act of self-improvement outside of her Army duty; while in the latter, Virtue 3 is highlighted. Though this Soldier’s efforts were not specifically helping military members they did greatly enhance the community as well as military/community relations. Whereas posters, signs, and the like might be used to promote these virtues, directly highlighting key examples from within the ranks will do much more to ingrain positive behavior into Soldiers than mere recitation.

In early 2001 a senior Colonel commented to me, “You are uniquely responsible for your own actions.”

This statement is as true today as it was those years ago. We, as Army Professionals, are directly responsible for what we do or do not do. The first step remains to embrace and embody what our Army holds dear. This adage also pertains to the Soldiers to our left and right. They are responsible for their own actions as well as their attitude. You could give someone who is hungry a 3-course meal, but they are still responsible for eating it in order to alleviate their hunger. We can give our organization bullet points, slogans, and the like, but it takes their “buy-in.” To this end, a way to achieve this buy-in is through the use of example and positive reinforcement. While nothing is 100%, in our modern society where people prefer authenticity to “show” the Army will have more success in developing a culture of Professionalism through the accentuation and embodiment of Professional Virtues.

## **AFTERWARD**

Being a Chaplain, I have written based on my training, experience, and area of expertise. To this end, I have proposed a practical, tangible, and fairly self-evident series of virtue ethics designed to guide the contemporary Soldier. These ethics stem from the positive aspects of fulfilling the Decalogue. Despite incorporating Judeo-Christian and Islamic references in elaborating the Decalogue, my proposed Virtue Ethics do not promote a particular religious or faith agenda. Rather, in the vein of thought reflected by Luther, Calvin, and numerous other scholars I have chosen to highlight the positive actions implicit within the Ten Commandments. While most of the Commandments read as a statement of what not to do, these Biblical scholars, along with Church tradition throughout the centuries, note of the wider reaching aspects of these Divine commands. For instance, whereas the Sixth Commandment reads, “Do not commit murder”, the positive imperative from this Commandment yields a promotion of life and life

affirming behaviors. To this end, my sixth point notes the promotion of physical, mental, and spiritual health, all of which are directly tied to the intent of the Sixth Commandment.

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