

THE ARMY ETHIC WHITE PAPER

The foundation of our profession is centered on trust... it will take every measure of competence and commitment to forge ahead and above all it will take character.

General Raymond T. Odierno
Chief of Staff, US Army

Being an [Army Professional] means a total embodiment of the Warrior Ethos and the Army Ethic. Our Soldiers need uncompromising and unwavering leaders. We cannot expect our Soldiers to live by an ethic when their leaders and mentors are not upholding the standard. These values form the framework of our profession and are nonnegotiable.

SMA Raymond F. Chandler, III
Sergeant Major of the Army

11 JULY 2014

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Cover quotes:

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FOREWORD

Professionals are guided by their ethic; the set of principles by which they practice, in the right way, on behalf of those they serve – demonstrating their *Character*. This is their *identity*. Likewise, as Army Professionals we perform our *Duty* according to our Ethic. Doing so reinforces *Trust* within the profession and with the American people.

As we move further into the 21st Century, complete operations in Afghanistan, and preserve the legacy of honorable service and sacrifice we have all made during the last thirteen plus years of continuous conflict, we find ourselves in a period of strategic transition which presents tremendous opportunities for the profession. The Army should be the nation's leading institution for human capital and ethical development. To become that leader, we must intensify our understanding of what it means for the Army to be a Profession. The recent publication of ADRP 1, *The Army Profession*, brought us a long way in achieving that understanding, but we must do more.

This White Paper identifies an omission in our doctrine – the absence of an articulated, accessible, and understandable expression of the Army Ethic. The Army Ethic does exist and emanates from our foundational heritage, beliefs, traditions, and culture. The intent, therefore, is not to invent the Army Ethic, but rather to glean its fundamental nature. Doing so is of urgent importance and is worthy of our collective wisdom and judgment. As the Army Profession prepares for the environment that lies ahead, we must anticipate the unique ethical challenges the future will present, and remain committed to developing Army Professionals of *Character, Competence, and Commitment*. Clearly articulating our ethic will help us do just that.

This effort allows us to synthesize and draw from previous expressions and prior work that collectively provide the content for a unifying, enduring, and comprehensive articulation of the Army Ethic. I envision this articulation assisting the Army with: informing and inspiring Army Professionals in making right decisions and taking right actions in the conduct of the mission, in the performance of Duty, and in all aspects of life; driving Character Development and Professional Certification; inspiring shared identity as Trustworthy Army Professionals; guiding the Army Profession in the ethical design, generation, support, and application of landpower (Honorable Service in defense of America's values and people); and motivating stewardship of the Army Profession.

As we move forward with this strategically important initiative, I welcome your perspectives and recommendations in order to achieve consensus on the expression of our Ethic.



Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

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INTRODUCTION

The Army Ethic explains the nature of *Honorable Service** for the Army, both as an institution and as a profession, in the accomplishment of the *mission*. It expresses the standard and expectation for all of us to make right decisions and to take right actions in the conduct of the *mission*, performance of *Duty*, and in all aspects of our lives.

The Army Ethic explains *why* we conduct ourselves morally and ethically, instead of just describing the *what* and *how* of professional service. It provides motivation and inspiration for each of us to perform our *Duty* in a manner worthy of the *Trust* of the American people and each other.

When people talk about the institutions that they trust...the United States Army is at the top of the list. Whether it is a man or woman in uniform or a Civilian...this is a team that needs to ensure that there is a mutual trust...so it is a very special relationship...forged over time....

John M. McHugh
21st Secretary of the Army

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The Army Ethic emphasizes and informs *Stewardship*: caring for and developing subordinates, peers, and leaders in *Character, Competence, and Commitment*; safeguarding and maintaining property; and exercising appropriate and disciplined use of resources.

The Army Ethic guides the *ethical* design, generation, support, and application of landpower, including regulations, policies, programs, procedures, practices, and systems.

Living the Army Ethic inspires and strengthens our shared *identity* as Trustworthy Army Professionals, drives *Character Development*, and reinforces *Trust* -- among Soldiers, Army Civilians, Army Families, and with the American people.

Therefore, expressing the Army Ethic in doctrine is imperative.

The goal is an articulated, accessible, commonly understood, and universally applicable Army Ethic -- motivating *Honorable Service*, guiding and inspiring right decisions and actions. In turn, the Army Ethic will drive the *Concept and Strategy for Character Development*.

BACKGROUND

The present need to articulate the Army Ethic surfaced during the CY11 Army Profession Campaign. In April 2012, the Commanding General, TRADOC published the Army Profession Campaign Report. It provided findings and recommendations related to the status of the Army Profession after more than a decade of continuous armed conflict.²

Among its findings, Soldiers and Army Civilians asked for an expression of the nature of our profession, the Army Ethic, and the doctrinal concepts and principles that clarify our *identity* and roles. Specifically, members across the profession noted that no single document exists to identify and define the Army Ethic.³

* Throughout this paper, words or expressions in *Italics* have an operational meaning within the lexicon of the Army Profession. They must be commonly understood and consistently applied in the practice of our profession.

In response, ADP 1 – *The Army*, September 2012, included a new chapter entitled, *Our Profession*. It identified *Trust* as the foundation for our relationship with the American people and for successful accomplishment of the *mission*.⁴ Subsequently, for the first time, a supporting ADP 1 – *The Army Profession* was released on 14 June 2013.

This doctrine describes Army culture and the Army Ethic as the foundation for developing the moral *identity* of Army Professionals. It notes that the essential characteristic *Trust* is based on adherence to the Army Ethic in the performance of *Duty* and in all aspects of life.⁵

The people entrust ... the lives of their children to soldier in our ranks. They trust that the Army will not waste those precious resources This *sacred trust* defines the bond between our Nation and its Soldiers.

[Those] who display questionable characteristics, such as double standards, evidence of unfaithfulness, or even disregard for law ... create an environment of mistrust. There can be no equivocation of trust; it either exists or it does not.

General Robert W. Cone
Former CG, TRADOC

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Army doctrine further recognizes that the Army Ethic is informed by law, Army Values, beliefs expressed in codes and creeds, and is embedded within our unique Army culture.

Our ethic embodies fundamental precepts that enable us to understand the purpose of our lives in *Honorable Service* to the Nation. It notes that ethical practices are *the* professional standard and that unethical practices must not be tolerated.

The Army has earned the trust of the American people as a professional organization and we must employ all necessary measures to preserve this confidence. We expect all of you to...demonstrate the character, competence, and commitment that are essential to the profession.

General John F. Campbell
Vice Chief of Staff, US Army

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PROBLEM

Although ADP 1 offers a definition and framework, it does not fully describe the Army Ethic so that it is accessible, commonly understood, and universally applicable. This does not mean that the Army Profession lacks an ethic. However, the moral principles underlying our oaths, creeds, values, and virtues, are not integrated within a concise, holistic expression.

Today, we remain without doctrine that clearly expresses *why* and *how* the Army Ethic motivates and inspires *Honorable Service* as reflected in our decisions and actions.⁸

This omission causes inconsistent understanding among Army Professionals and must be redressed.

RISK

Failure to publish and promulgate the Army Ethic *in doctrine*:

- Neglects the explicit inclusion of moral and ethical reasoning informing Army Values-based decisions and actions under Mission Command;
- Fails to inspire our shared *identity* as Trustworthy Army Professionals and our *Duty* to uphold ethical standards;
- Compromises our ability to develop and certify the *Character* of Army Professionals, essential to *Trust*;
- Continues misunderstanding among the Army Profession cohorts concerning the vital role that each plays in the ethical conduct of Mission Command;
- Concedes that legalistic, rules-based, and consequential reasoning dominate Soldier and Army Civilian decisions and actions; and
- Permits the continuation of dissonance between our professed ethic and nonconforming institutional policies and practices.

DISCUSSION

The imperative of the Army Ethic is not new. Its influence on the conduct of our *mission* and the performance of *Duty* is evident in the guidance of General Washington and Congress to the Continental Army. “In 1776, American leaders believed that it was not enough to win the war. They also had to win in a way that was consistent with the values of their society and the principles of their cause....It happened in a way that was different from the ordinary course of wars in general. In Congress and the Army, American leaders resolved that the War of Independence would be conducted with a respect for human rights, even for the enemy.”⁹ Decades later, the Commander in Chief, President Lincoln, promulgated *General Order No. 100 (1863) Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field*, based upon the *Lieber Code*, to guide the ethical conduct of the Union Army in the Civil War.¹⁰ Even later, as the American Army entered World War I, General John J. Pershing found it necessary to publish guidance concerning the conduct of his Officers and Soldiers.¹¹

Following World War II, General George C. Marshall asked Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall to write The Armed Forces Officer. He believed all services needed to base their professional commitment on a common moral-ethical foundation, providing guidance on conduct, standards, and *Duty* for the American military.¹² Today, the current edition continues to instruct all services regarding the fundamental moral-ethical obligations of serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. The philosophy unites the uniformed services in their common calling of supporting, defending, and upholding the Constitution in service to our country.¹³

Over forty years ago, as the Army transitioned from the Vietnam War, the *Study on Military Professionalism* recognized there can be no tension between *mission* accomplishment and professional ethics.¹⁴

In 1986, then Chief of Staff of the Army General John A. Wickham, Jr. published DA Pam 600-68 – *The Bedrock of Our Profession*, which addressed the “Professional Army Ethic.”¹⁵ This document was not updated with the promulgation of Army Values and it expired.

In 1998, then Chief of Staff of the Army General Dennis J. Reimer directed that FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* include the essential nature of Army Values in guiding the decisions and actions of Army Professionals.

Values are at the core of everything our Army is and does. Army Values form the foundation of character. ... These values tell us what we need to be in every action we take. They are non-negotiable and apply to everyone all the time in every situation.

General Dennis J. Reimer
33rd Chief of Staff of the Army

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This sentiment endures. As affirmed in *The United States Army Operating Concept*, the Army Values serve as our guide about our *covenant* with the American people.¹⁷ The principle underlying this observation is emphasized in doctrine. “The Nation’s and the profession’s values are not negotiable. Violations are not just mistakes; they are failures in meeting the fundamental standards of the [Army Profession].”¹⁸ In this light, “American values affect every aspect of how U.S. forces fight and win.”¹⁹

In December 2010, then TRADOC Commander, General Martin E. Dempsey, distributed an Army White Paper on *The Profession of Arms*.²⁰ This paper, intended to facilitate dialogue, was neither definitive nor authoritative. It served as the catalyst for the CY 11 Profession of Arms Campaign (later renamed the Army Profession Campaign). In February 2012, the Army Civilian Corps released its own White Paper recognizing the importance of Army Civilians as vital members of the Army Profession.²¹ A few months later, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey issued another White Paper on *America’s Military – A Profession of Arms*.²² In common, all of these works cite the importance of an ethic in guiding the decisions and actions of Army Professionals. **None, however, attempted to express the ethic in a manner that was complete and applicable to all Soldiers and Army Civilians.**

A code of ethics ... cannot be developed overnight by edict or official pronouncement. It is developed by years of practice and performance of *Duty* according to high ethical standards. It must be self-policing. Without such a code, a professional Soldier or a group soon loses its *Identity* [emphasis added] and effectiveness.

SMA Silas L. Copeland
3rd Sergeant Major of the Army

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In the past thirty years, many Army Professionals have published theses, journal articles, and reports reflecting their concerns and recommendations for improving both the expression of and commitment to living by appropriate ethical principles in the practice of our profession.

In 1985, then Major Linda Ewing wrote that there is an objective, logical, and principled nature to the values that framed our nation; and these remain inherent within our [Army] ethic.²⁴ Citing her work in his own thesis, then Major Martin E. Dempsey, discussed the imperative of *Duty* within the Army Ethic. He expressed the concern that *Duty* is not well defined, and therefore not well understood and applied in the conduct of the *mission* and in shaping the *identity* of Army Professionals.²⁵

In November 1991, Dr. James T. Johnson wrote a review of Moral Issues in Military Decision Making, authored by now retired Brigadier General Anthony E. Hartle. Dr. Johnson noted that much had been written about the concept of professional military ethics, but that these collective writings lacked sufficient commonality to define the ethic coherently and systematically. He observed that General

Hartle’s book made a substantive contribution to providing that synthesis. However, in his opinion, it did not concisely and clearly articulate the Army Ethic.²⁶

Nineteen years later, reflecting on the importance of such an expression, the 36th Chief of Staff of the Army, General W. George Casey Jr. explained his decision to create the Army Center for the Professional Military Ethic, at West Point [now the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE)]. General Casey charged CAPE with the *mission* “to create and integrate knowledge about our ethic.”²⁷ He believed that our Army Ethic was essential to the development of leaders who make ethical decisions and “demonstrate the confidence and courage to do what is right.”²⁸

Today, the Army Ethic remains a concept, described as the, “...set of laws, values, and beliefs...within the Army culture...” motivating and guiding the conduct of Army Professionals in a common moral purpose.²⁹ This description is little advanced from observations made in 2009 by Dr. Don M. Snider, et al. regarding “The Army’s Professional Military Ethic in an Era of Persistent Conflict.” The purpose of their monograph was to provide a framework within which scholars and practitioners could discuss the various aspects of the Army’s Ethic. They observed that such discussion is especially challenging because the Army lacks common models and language for this dialogue.

Current Army doctrine and scholarly research do not provide a construct for examining the Army Ethic.

COL (R) Don M. Snider, Ph.D., MAJ Paul Oh, MAJ Kevin Toner ³⁰

In September 2012, LTC Clark C. Barrett suggested “The Right Way” to establish an Army institutional Ethic. His thesis is that the “frameworks” the Army has adopted only imply, they do not explicitly state an Army Ethic. He proposes an integration of the disjointed and disconnected Army ethical prescriptions. He further emphasizes that the Army Ethic plays a key role in shaping the *Character Development* of Army Professionals.³¹

Colonel Brian Michelson, in his USAWC Strategy Research Project, argues that the Army Profession’s concept for developing *Character* is ineffective. It is compromised because Army doctrine does not explicitly articulate the Army Ethic. Hence, the Army Profession does not have a consensus strategy for *Character Development*. His conclusion is that our approach is *laissez faire*.³²

Colonel John A. Vermeesch, writing in *Military Review*, offered his conclusion that the Army Profession is challenged by the lack of *Character Development* systems. In redressing this condition, he recommends paying particular attention to moral and ethical reasoning. He believes a well-designed and implemented strategy for *Character Development* will strengthen professional *identity* and enhance appreciation for and application of Army Values.³³

Similar concerns and expectations exist for Army Civilians. Brigadier General (Retired) Volney Warner, President of the Army Civilian University, and Ms. Natalie Liu Duncan stated in their 2011 “Army Civilians – Professionals by Any Definition,” *Military Review* article, “As government professionals Army Civilians have obligations to the highest standards of performance and accountability to high ethical standards.”³⁴

In the Army Civilian White Paper (2012), the authors noted that all Army leaders must be the living embodiment of the Army Ethic. The Army Ethic enables *Trust* externally with the American people and internally within the ranks. They affirmed that Army Civilians, “...share the same Army Values, profess and embody the same Army Ethic, and maintain the same *mission-focus*.”³⁵ Thus, all Army education for Soldiers and Army Civilians requires an articulated Army Ethic in order to support a holistic concept and strategy for *Character Development*.

Recognizing this decades long omission in doctrine and strategy, Lieutenant Colonel Brian Imiola and Major Danny Cazier, of the US Military Academy, Department of English and Philosophy, recommended in their *Military Review* article that we get “on the road” and articulate our Army Ethic. Their position, echoing the point previously made by Major Ewing, is that the Army Ethic must be expressed as enduring principles. They emphasize that these principles must be “internalized, not merely memorized.”³⁶ In a more recent article, Lieutenant Colonel Imiola restates this view and concludes, “Up to this point the Army has failed to adequately express such an ethic.”³⁷

Within the Army Profession, described in ADP 1/ADRP 1, the Army Ethic is integral to *Military Expertise* (Competence), *Honorable Service* (Character), *Stewardship* (Commitment), and *Esprit de Corps* (Winning Spirit and Morale); without these, *Trust* fails. However, with an articulated and understandable Army Ethic, we can sustain the moral-ethical *ethos* within our Army culture. Thus, the Army Ethic should drive *Character Development* and inform certification of Army Professionals.

Reputation is what people think you are; *Character* is what you are.

We build *Character* ... in order for us to withstand the rigors of combat and resist the temptations to compromise our principles. ... [We] must have the intestinal fortitude to carry out [our] *Duties* and to do what is right for our Soldiers and our Army.

SMA Glen E. Morrell
7th Sergeant Major of the Army

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Properly expressed, the Army Ethic explains *Character* and how this quality is reflected in decisions and actions. The ethic informs the *identity* of Army Professionals (Soldiers and Army Civilians) in providing loyal and *Honorable Service* to the Nation. It explains *why* ethical conduct is the standard, *why* unethical practices are not tolerated, and provides motivation for upholding Army Values. The ethic also explains *what* is expected in ethical conduct of the *mission*, in the performance of *Duty* and in all aspects of life. Thus, it inspires Army Professionals’ dedication to continuous development in *Character*, *Competence*, and *Commitment*.

Our *mission* is to publish and promulgate the Army Ethic to inspire and strengthen our shared *identity* as Trustworthy Army Professionals, drive *Character Development*, and reinforce *Trust* among Soldiers, Army Civilians, Army Families, and with the American people.

The key facts informing *mission* accomplishment -- The Army Ethic:

- Embraces American values embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
- Expresses the nature of *Honorable Service* and the mandate to uphold Army Values.
- Guides the ethical design, generation, support, and application of landpower.
- Informs regulations, policies, doctrine, programs, systems, practices, and procedures.

To accomplish this *mission* we make two fundamental assumptions. First, the Army Ethic does exist, but must be concisely and clearly expressed so that it is accessible, commonly understood, and applicable throughout the profession. This assumption is warranted based upon the extensive literature discussing the ethic and its framework as expressed in ADRP1. Second, upon taking their Oath members of the Army Profession voluntarily relinquish some of their rights as American citizens. This includes the right to make decisions or take actions that conflict with the Army Ethic.

The origins and foundation for the Army Ethic include a philosophical heritage, based upon the writings of prominent Greeks and Romans; a theological heritage, based largely upon Judeo-Christian writings

and teachings; and a cultural and historical heritage -- for example, our tradition of the Citizen-Soldier and the All-Volunteer Army. These foundations are enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution and our Bill of Rights. They are also reflected in US Code (e.g., Titles 5, 10, 32; Uniform Code of Military Justice; treaties; status of forces agreements; and the Law of Armed Conflict). They are further expressed in our oaths and creeds.

It all begins with the oath of office. The “profession and ethic”...are inseparable. The oath clearly brings this out. Military professionals incur moral responsibilities, including adherence to treaties governing the ethical application of landpower and respecting the rights of persons. When we take this oath, we are making a...commitment to abide by the values and interests of the American people. We are pledging ourselves to the ethical foundation of our profession and that of the Nation.

LTG Robert L. Caslen, Jr.
Superintendent, US Military Academy

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Beyond the law, these ethical and moral principles are expressed in the Declaration of Independence, Western Just War Tradition, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, universal norms (e.g., Golden Rule), Army Values, Creeds, and Mottos.

The Army Ethic must have a pervasive influence throughout the Army Profession. This includes the *Essential Characteristics*, operations (e.g., Mission Command), the institution (e.g., Education and Training), and Army Culture. It motivates and inspires shared professional *identity* and an appreciation for the complementary roles of each cohort. When doctrinally captured, it serves as the foundation for the concept and strategy for *Character Development* and provides ethical standards for certification in *Character*.

Living the Army Ethic is a commitment and an expectation. Specifically, the Army Ethic informs, motivates, and inspires Army Professionals to:

- Seek to discover the truth, decide what is right (ethical, effective, efficient), and demonstrate the *Character, Competence, and Commitment* to act accordingly.
- Contribute *Honorable Service* in the conduct of the *mission*, performance of *Duty*, and all aspects of life.
- *Stand Strong* as *Stewards* of the Army Profession to uphold the Army Ethic -- prevent misconduct and do what is right to stop unethical practices.

The Army Ethic guides the conduct of Army operations as described in Army Doctrine, and applies equally to all environments. In the conduct of our *mission*, the Army Ethic supports *Unified Land Operations* (ADP 3-0), through its contribution to the professional development of all Army leaders in the ethical design, generation, support, and application of landpower.⁴⁰

The *Operations Process* (ADP 5-0) and *Mission Command* (ADP 6-0), recognize that military operations are foremost a human undertaking. In this regard, Army Professionals comply with applicable laws, treaties, and host nation agreements. Commanders at all levels ensure their Soldiers operate in accordance with the law of war and the rules of engagement.⁴¹ Thus, conduct which violates legal and regulatory norms is unacceptable. Beyond that minimum standard, Army Professionals’ decisions and actions must also reflect the moral foundations of the Army Ethic. In doing so, Army Professionals uphold the ethical principles guiding the use of force on behalf of our Nation.⁴² This is a tenet of *Honorable Service* revealing an omission in operations doctrine. Those principles of application include “critical and creative thinking,” yet are silent on the imperative of ethical reasoning in the decision process.⁴³

Mission Command requires an environment of mutual *Trust*, shared understanding, prudent risk, and disciplined initiative. “*Trust* is assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, and truth” of another.⁴⁴ Thus, we earn *Trust* by upholding the Army Values and exercising ethical leadership, consistent with the Army’s leadership principles. Further, Mission Command is enabled through *Stewardship*, an ethical *Duty* of Army Professionals.⁴⁵

The Foreword to ADP 6-22 *Army Leadership* states, “Leadership is paramount to our profession. It is integral to our institutional success today and tomorrow.....our Army requires...leaders of character.”⁴⁶ It quotes General Omar Bradley, who observed, “Leadership in a democratic army means firmness, not harshness; understanding, not weakness; generosity, not selfishness; pride, not egotism.”⁴⁷

This perspective resonates with the earlier guidance provided by Major General John M. Schofield regarding discipline and Soldiers of a free nation:

The discipline which makes the Soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an Army. It is possible to impart instruction and to give commands in such a manner and such a tone of voice to inspire in the Soldier no feeling but an intense desire to obey, while the opposite manner and tone of voice cannot fail to excite strong resentment and a desire to disobey. The one mode or the other of dealing with subordinates springs from a corresponding spirit in the breast of the commander.

Major General John M. Schofield
Address to the US Corps of Cadets
US Military Academy
August 11, 1879

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These exemplary Army leaders confirmed that *Respect*, an Army Value, integral within the Army Ethic, is necessary to accomplish the *mission*.

Leaders of *Character* must live by the Army Ethic, adhering to Army Values. This *Commitment* is inherent within their professional *identity* and demonstrated in the example they set for others.⁴⁹ *Character* is required of a leader, recognized in the Leadership Requirements Model (ADP 6-22) and for professional certification (ADP 1).⁵⁰

The U.S. Army Learning Concept for 2015 discusses an Army learning model that develops Soldiers and leaders capable of meeting the challenges of operational adaptability in an era of persistent conflict.⁵¹ In order to support such leader development, the Army Learning Model (ALM) must include critical, creative, and *ethical* thinking in its design and implementation. Otherwise, it will not fully serve its purpose, as clearly stated in *The Army Capstone Concept*.

To facilitate the necessary level of adaptation, Army forces empower increasingly lower echelons of command with the capabilities, capacities, authorities, and responsibilities needed to think independently and act decisively, **morally, and ethically**.

TRADOC Pam 525-3-0 *The Army Capstone Concept*

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We cannot expect that Army Professionals will be worthy of *Trust* -- through consistent demonstration of *Character*, *Competence*, and *Commitment* -- without explicit programs to provide for their professional development. Such programs, including education, training, experience, and opportunities

for self-development are a professional expectation within the institutional Army. The Army doctrine on training of units and developing leaders provides the rationale.

“Good training gives Soldiers confidence in their abilities and the abilities of their leaders, forges *Trust* [emphasis added], and allows the unit to adapt readily to new and different missions.”

ADP 7-0 *Training Units and Developing Leaders* ⁵³

This observation reveals that “good training” provides for *Competence* (the ability to perform *Duty to Standard*) and *Character* (the *Commitment* to perform *Duty* in accord with the Army Ethic).

The recently published *Army Leader Development Strategy 2013* (ALDS) is guided by the imperative to develop *Competent* and *Committed* leaders of *Character*.⁵⁴

Leader development is the deliberate, continuous, and progressive process—founded in Army Values—that grows Soldiers and Army Civilians into **competent, committed** professional leaders of **character**. Leader development is achieved through the career-long synthesis of the training, education, and experiences acquired through opportunities in the institutional, operational, and self-development domains, supported by peer and developmental relationships. All of these take place in and are influenced by the society the Army is sworn to defend under the Constitution. Our strategy must be all encompassing....

Army Leader Development Strategy 2013 ⁵⁵

The Army Ethic is central to achieving this goal. The ALDS notes that, “Mastering the fundamentals is a professional obligation and provides the basis by which Army leaders operate *effectively* [emphasis added] in the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) environment.”⁵⁶ **Recognizing the importance of operating *ethically*, as well as *effectively*, makes articulating the Army Ethic imperative.** The strategy continues, “The leaders we develop today will meet the security challenges of tomorrow. Our organizations will be judged by the performance of leaders serving in areas where *critical thinking skills* [emphasis added] are essential.”⁵⁷ Explicitly including the imperative of *ethical reasoning* highlights the need for an articulated Army Ethic. Recognizing this critical component of leader development is particularly relevant to future challenges, especially those created by emerging technologies.

Joint Doctrine addresses moral and ethical considerations in decision making and in the application of force, embedding moral action within the “Center of Gravity”. It recognizes that legitimacy, which can be a decisive factor, is based on the legality, morality, and rightness of actions.⁵⁸

The *Art of Joint Command* includes, “The combination of courage, ethical leadership, judgment, intuition, situational awareness, and the ability to consider contrary views gained over time through training, education, and experience helps commanders make difficult decisions in complex situations.”⁵⁹ Replacing the word “difficult” with the word “right” (ethical, effective, and efficient) redresses an ambiguity (what makes a decision “difficult”) and provides the opportunity to focus on making *right* decisions and taking *right* actions.

Reinforce the Army Profession in the 21st Century

The Army develops professional leaders who demonstrate the character, competence, commitment, and resilience required, whether operationally deployed or in a training environment. We must foster a climate of trust that respects and protects our Soldiers, Civilians, and Family Members. Trust provides the basic ethical building blocks that underpin our profession.

ALDS - Army Leader Development Strategy 2013 ⁶⁰

This ALDS goal directly supports the strategic vision of, “An Army of competent and committed leaders of character with the skills and attributes necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.”⁶¹ Realization of this vision depends upon an articulated, accessible, commonly understood, and universally applicable Army Ethic.

SUMMARY AND SOLUTION

The Army Ethic motivates and inspires our shared *identity* as *Trustworthy Army Professionals*, *honorably serving* the American people, providing *military expertise* in defense of the nation, and guiding the profession now and for the future through faithful *stewardship* of the people and resources entrusted to our care. Living by the Army Ethic is our way of life. It requires life-long professional development in *Character*, *Competence*, and *Commitment*. This quest is a duty consistent with our shared identity.

Articulating and living by the Army Ethic:

- Inspires and strengthens our shared *identity* as Trustworthy Army Professionals.
- Expresses *Honorable Service* as our *ethical*, *effective*, and *efficient* conduct of the *mission*, performance of *Duty*, and way of life.
- Motivates our *Duty* to continuously develop *Military Expertise* throughout the Army Profession.
- Emphasizes *Stewardship* of our people and resources and enhances *Esprit de Corps*.
- Drives *Character Development* for the Army.
- Reinforces *Trust* within the profession and with the American people.
- Is essential to Mission Command.

We propose the following description of the Army Ethic and its guiding moral principles:

The Army Ethic
The Heart of the Army

Introduction

The Army Ethic defines the moral principles that guide us in the conduct of our missions, performance of duty, and all aspects of life. Our ethic is reflected in law, Army Values, creeds, oaths, ethos, and shared beliefs embedded within Army culture. It inspires and motivates all of us to make right decisions and to take right actions at all times.

The Army Ethic is the heart of our shared professional identity, our sense of who we are, our purpose in life, and *why* and *how* we serve the American people. To violate the Army Ethic is to break our sacred bond of trust with each other and with those whom we serve. Failure to live by and uphold the Army Ethic brings dishonor on us all and may have strategic implications for the mission.

Army Professionals fulfill distinctive roles as honorable servants, military experts, and stewards of our profession. By our solemn oath, we voluntarily incur an extraordinary moral obligation inherent in the identity to which we aspire:

Trustworthy Army Professionals.

Honorable Servants of the Nation – Professionals of Character:

By oath, we support and defend the Constitution, subordinate to civilian authority, and obey the laws of the Nation and the orders of those appointed over us; we reject and report illegal or immoral orders or actions.

We take pride in honorably serving the Nation with integrity and demonstrating character in all aspects of our lives.

We recognize the intrinsic dignity and worth of all people, treating them with respect and compassion.

We demonstrate courage by setting the example for right conduct despite risk, uncertainty, and fear; and we candidly express our professional judgment to subordinates, peers, and superiors.

Military Experts – Competent Professionals:

We commit ourselves to do our duty, with discipline and to standard, putting the needs of others above our own, and accomplish the mission as a team.

We understand the mission may justly require taking the lives of others while courageously placing our own lives at risk.

We continuously advance our expertise in the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our chosen profession, seeking the truth, and striving for excellence through life-long learning and professional development.

Stewards of the Army Profession – Committed Professionals:

We uphold the standards of the profession and adhere to its values; we lead by example and hold ourselves and others accountable for decisions and actions.

We apply discipline in our use of the resources entrusted to us by the American people; we ensure our Army is well-equipped, well-trained, and well-led; and we care for and develop Soldiers, Army Civilians, and Families.

We develop and sustain *Esprit de Corps* and persevere, adapt, and overcome adversity, challenges, and setbacks.



CONCLUSION

Failure to publish and promulgate the Army Ethic *in doctrine* continues an omission, which compromises the development and conduct of our future force.

Therefore, to motivate, inspire, and inform the development of Army Professionals in *Character, Competence, and Commitment* we must articulate and promulgate the Army Ethic.

The Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, as the Army modernization proponent (AR 5-22) for the Army Profession, Army Ethic, and *Character Development*, will lead a cooperative effort to articulate and publish the Army Ethic, NLT 14 Jun 2015, the Army's 240th Anniversary.

Submit Feedback

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