



**STRATEGY  
RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

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**VALUES: THEIR FORMULATION AND DEGRADATION  
IN MODERN AMERICA AND THE CHALLENGE  
FOR THE STRATEGIC LEADER**

**BY**

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ABSTRACT

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The past three decades have seen a measurable change in America's values -- a change that can be described as a decrease or degradation. Intangible beliefs and measures of worth are eroding at an alarming rate. Given that values are the backbone of the code of the Armed Forces and that the United States military is a reflection of our society, this degradation will have a profound effect on the core holdings that have been characteristic of our soldiers for centuries. The future of the Armed Forces of the United States will require commissioned and non-commissioned officers to instruct, mentor, and set the example in an unprecedented manner if we are to preserve values and worth.



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## **Introduction**

Regardless of the source of pressure to act unethically, you usually know in your heart the right thing to do. The real question is whether or not you have the character to live by your professional values when under pressure. If you have the right values, the thing to do in most situations will normally be clear, and you will do it.

Field Manual 22-100  
*Military Leadership*  
"Professional Beliefs, Values, and Ethics"

The past three decades have seen a measurable change in America's values -- a change that can be described as a decrease or degradation. It has been alluded that intangible beliefs and measures of worth are eroding at an alarming rate. Given that values are the backbone of the code of the Armed Forces and that the United States military is a reflection of our society, this degradation will have a profound effect on our core holdings. The future of the Armed Forces of the United States will require commissioned and non-commissioned officers to instruct, mentor, and set the example in an unprecedented manner if we are to preserve these basic values and worth.

## **Values as the Foundation**

Of all the thousands of things that come under the heading of 'Leadership,' what is it that's 'most important'?  
Simple...soldiers' values.

Colonel Dandridge M. "Mike" Malone  
"Soldier Values and Soldier Discipline"

In 1986 the Army released another of its now often referenced White Papers. The concept of these small publications was conceived by General John A. Wickham, Jr., then Chief of Staff of the Army, and the Secretary of the Army "...as a way to focus attention on issues important to our Army." The

first White Paper, 1981, maintained the theme "Yorktown -- The Spirit of Victory," and served as a reminder of the Army's historic roots. Edition 1982 focused on "Fitness" and the need of soldiers to be physically prepared for the rigors of combat. In 1983, the overall quality of the Army was the campaign with the "Army of Excellence" theme. The "Army Family" was next, and Quality of Life for soldier and family remains to this day a keystone of service life. In 1985, "Leadership" received special focus as we turned to the first pillar and what would forever be known as the "enduring legacy."<sup>1</sup>

But the 1986 edition is very different from the others. In retrospect, the Wickham series should have started with this topic as it is the basis from which all the others flow. This issue is a concise overview of the principles that make military service unique among all professions. In a mere ten pages, *White Paper 1986* walks us through the definition of values, gives a historic prospective, discusses types of values, and tells why they are "the bedrock of our profession."

## **Values Defined**

There may be justification, or even a definite need, to restate in strong and clear terms those principles of conduct which retain an unchallengeable relevance to the necessity of the military profession and to which the officer corps will be expected to conform regardless of behavioral practices elsewhere.

General Maxwell D. Taylor

What are values? Applicable to any "profession," values are what the institution as a body judges to be right. Beyond the written and spoken word, they are the "moral, ethical, and professional attributes of character." They may also be described as the "attitudes about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or things." Values "influence...behavior" because they

force you to make a choice when a decision has to be made. As one may see, weak values or *opinion* can cause one to choose a path that does not support the values or design of the group as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

Values serve an important role for the soldier. They are what permit us to continue despite the rigors of combat and the daily challenges of life that beckon us to compromise principles such as integrity, loyalty, and selflessness. In the end, the enrichment of the values that we bring to military service, coupled with those that we absorb during the experience, "...strengthen the values that make up our character [and enable] us to strengthen our inner self, strengthen our bonding to others, and strengthen our commitment to a higher calling."<sup>3</sup>

We need a rock-solid ethical base because those who make moral decisions about right and wrong must themselves abide by the highest standards of behavior. This ethical base is the cornerstone of our Army because it governs the faith and trust that our subordinates have in their leaders, the support and resources that our fellow citizens are willing to entrust to our stewardship, and ultimately, our human capacity to prevail on the battlefield.<sup>4</sup>

### **Birth Of A Value -- The Source**

It was in the infield of a baseball stadium in some mid-Western town in the early 50's. Joe DeMaggio was surrounded by reporters, as it had just been announced that he, once again, was selected as professional baseball's Most Valuable Player of the Year. One reporter asked, 'Joe, you ain't gettin' any younger -- why do you continue to play so hard, year, after year, after year?' Looking around, first at the crowd of media-types, Joe pointed up at the stadium seats and pronounced, 'Because each game there's someone up there who's never seen me play before.'

An Unknown Newspaper Reporter

Where do values come from? An examination of the innumerable sources from which we draw our sense of value is most certainly contained in volumes found elsewhere. However, in order to express concern for their continuance and the role of the military leader as charge for their maintenance, it is important that we take a brief glance into this fertile expanse.

The first source of the seed that fosters value growth within us is our parents. After all, most receive their first dose of everything from our parents or those that raise us. As the anti-smoking campaign advertisements portray, we "pick up" everything. We observe the driving habits of our parents from a very young age. If dad never stops at STOP signs but only executes "rolling Texas stops," then we infer from this that it is acceptable to breach this particular piece of the legal system. Once we have undergone formal driver education and have gained appreciation for the meaning of the road sign, then father's rolling stop becomes a decision point for us.

Another source of values is the lessons presented by our *friends*. It may be worth noting that they may not really be "friends" based on the quality of the scenarios with which they present us. "What's cool" is the order of the day. If cigarette smoking is the subject of choice -- despite the convincing evidence of the fatalism associated with the sport and despite the warnings and command directives from our parents -- then our values associated with that arena become eschewed. It is here, with the exposure from our acquaintances, that the norms of their parents come into play and the value-learning arc springs exponentially. Now we acquire from the values of both our parents or guardian and their parents also or guardian.

*Sports* is another field in which we observe both the good and bad of man. With victory through good sportsmanship as the desired outcome, and to

some, the main purpose of the team sport program, it is common to see conflict arise when values poorly acquired stain the event.

I remember an incident at a recent youth hockey tournament. It involved an out-of-state team that had taken up residence at a motel near the site of the competition. During the course of a game played against the team I was distantly associated with, our family observed several instances of poor sportsmanship and inappropriate zealousness. [As we were losing by a decisive margin, it is natural for us to observe and report with uncanny clarity.]

As I was reflecting on this piece on values, I mentally ran through some of the key points that had surfaced during my research. The incident did not end there, as the values "thing" has no boundaries. It was learned the next morning that the night of the game found the parents of the opposing team gathered in the hotel bar and the young players assembled in the hotel's game room. In two independent operations, the parents engaged in argument that led to physical fighting -- brawling -- in the bar/dining facility, and the children vandalized and otherwise destroyed the party room. Another case of the "like father, like son."

To quote General of the Armies Douglas MacArthur, "On the fields of friendly strife are sewn the seeds that, on other fields, on other days, will bear the fruits of victory."

Another avenue of expressing this concept is to say one learns or otherwise has values that are steered by *professional associates*. Whether we are doctor, lawyer, soldier, or Indian chief, we will gather, observe, hold, and evaluate the value lessons of those with whom we serve. As opposed to a relationship we have with friends, our comradeship with fellow employees is augmented -- often tainted -- through the strains associated with the

pressures of mission accomplishment for the sake of the business. As in sports, we sometimes see the dark side in others as this occurs.

## **The Pillars -- The Tenets of Values**

American military professionals do not fight to force our political system on others or to gain power or wealth. Professional soldiers are protectors of the ideals of America, willing to fight for these ideals so that others can live in a free and just society. To do this, they must be experts at leading soldiers in battle. The military leader who deeply values loyalty to the nation sees himself as a person who will always do his best to defend American ideals.

FM 22-100  
*Military Leadership*  
"What a Leader Must Be"

Civil and military organizations each define for their employees sets of tenets of values that the front office feels captures the meaning of values. Originally associated with the *professional* professions, values and the tenets of values are now found at the headquarters of numerous police departments, corporate headquarters, discount department store chains, educational institutions, as well as the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines. One of the most well known organizations whose charter is recognized and honored across the nation is the Boy Scouts of America. BSA has its tenets of values, and those who were exposed to them, no matter how far they progress through the Boy Scout ranks, remember a few of its items. The Scout Promise contains the following ideals:

A Scout is:

Trustworthy	Loyal	Helpful
Friendly	Courteous	Kind
Obedient	Cheerful	Thrifty
Brave	Clear	Reverent

As they do for the developing young Scout, these tenets tend to guide the overarching, general definition of values for the needs and goals of the organization. For example, the Scout Oath defines concepts that are important to youth to guide them and prepare them for the future. Cheerfulness, thriftiness, and kindness possess this ideal. The tenets of a military organization emphasize the skills of the combat leader, like ethics, personal behavior, and teamwork. In like manner, the ideals of a taxi company may be honesty, safety, and service to the customer. No matter what the line of duty, the tenets of values provide guidance and standard in the long run for the member.

A brief view of military tenets of leadership presents a unique opportunity to examine the purpose and design of these qualities. Few organizations spend the time and funds to create and advertise the details of their values as the armed forces. The U.S. Army's tenets bear particular note and were developed over a period of many years by many Chiefs of Staff. Known as the "four elements of the professional Army ethic," they are as follows:

1. Loyalty to the Nation, the Army, and the Unit.
2. Duty
3. Selfless Service
4. Integrity<sup>5</sup>

As the Scout Promise is a guide for that organization and its members, so are the elements of the Army's "promise." If the membership is to survive and carry out the mission and designs of the group, then the values of the larger body must survive.

## Scouting -- Paradise Lost

The Order is a thing of the spirit rather than of mechanics. Organization, operational procedures, and all that go with them are necessary in any large and growing movement, but they are not what counts in the end. The things of the spirit are what count:

*Brotherhood...*in a day when there is too much hatred at home and abroad.

*Cheerfulness...*in a day when the pessimists have the floor and cynics are popular.

*Service...*in a day when millions are interested in getting or grasping, rather than giving.

Dr. E. Urner Goodman  
Founder of the Order of the Arrow,  
Boy Scouts of America  
*Order of the Arrow Handbook*

There are certain organizations in American society that have for generations served as breeding grounds for the learning and preserving of values. The most famous of these is the Boy Scouts of America. Once an organization that claimed to have former members in key civil and military leadership positions all over our nation, this will soon no longer be the case. For almost two decades now, Scouting membership figures have been on the decrease. For generations of males who experienced Scouting's methods of instilling leadership, challenge, and adventure, it seems as though something important has been lost in our society.

The causes of the decline are varied. With increasing operational tempos at the workplace, adults are no longer as involved in Scouting as in the past. Scouting requires tremendous personal and professional sacrifice on the part of parents to "get involved" and seize a position of responsibility in a Boy Scout troop or a Cub Scout pack. [The same, of course, pertains to

the various Girl Scouts of America organizations.] Adults are no longer willing to take on this added burden in their lives.

The disposition of "today's youth" is often cited as the main deterrent to becoming a Scouter (the title used to describe an adult leader). Parents simply do not want to put up with it -- the vulgar language, the disrespect, the headphones. The feeling is that time can be best spent elsewhere. Some are very much focused on their own children -- which is good -- and are fighting off the wolves on the homefront. They do not have the time nor energy to take on the task of mentoring someone else's child.

Another reason for the demise of Scouting is the fact that today's young men are simply not interested in the program. It's not the cool thing to do, but then again, Scouting never was "cool" in some circles. Kids of the 21st Century are more interested in the malls, in video arcades, and in "hanging out." A Boy Scout -- not a Cub Scout who is often seen in uniform -- wearing his uniform to school in celebration of Boy Scout Week, once a common sight, is seldom seen today. Many even carry their uniform to the meeting place and change once inside the confines and security of the structure.

With the demise of the Boy Scouts of America comes the loss of one of the greatest bastions of values in our nation. There are few things that can replace the BSA and, at this point in time as we near the close of the 20th Century, it is safe to say there is nothing that will replace Scouting.

There is one entity out there that has recognized the loss, and it is attempting to regain the aura of the Scout troop. Recently, LeTort Elementary School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, commenced a pilot program being tested by Boy Scouts of America at six schools nationwide. The program is called "Learning For Life" and is sponsored by Monumental Life Insurance Company.

Starting in January 1997, one second- and one third-grade class will become working pieces of a values-oriented program. It consists of a collection of 57 lessons on themes (such as respecting differences and accepting consequences) that will be intentionally included in their classes. Students will participate in interactive weekly sessions that are designed to teach students to make ethical choices throughout their lives.

A second-grade teacher summed up the trends educators have witnessed in their students when he said, "We take it for granted that they're learning this stuff at home, and they're not."<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting that BSA headquarters has recognized the void associated with their decreased role in America -- a decreased role to the extent that they are experimenting with a new and innovative approach that attempts to teach values through other, comparably organized institutions.

I do not know where this will take us, but there is a definitive value change in America. Those organizations that thrive on values must be the ones that take a stand. One of those organizations is the United States military.

### **The Presidential Dilemma -- A View of the Top**

Military professionalism must ultimately be grounded on the premise that military ethics converge with the ethical values of the larger society. A military system in a democratic society cannot long maintain its credibility and legitimacy if its ethical standards significantly differ from the civilian values of the larger society.

Sam Sarkesian and Thomas M. Gannon  
*American Behavioral Scientist*  
"Professionalism," May/June 1976

Another phenomenon that has crept into our way of life has been the ever-increasing distrust that the American people hold for the highest office of the land -- the Presidency. One may say that this represents value decay at the source, although it was never intended that the White House be the mecca of truth withholdings. First hinted at during the Truman-MacArthur dilemma and eventual relief from command of the general, the concept really solidified during the Vietnam War. Under the Johnson and Nixon administrations, Americans almost unanimously felt lied to and deceived at the expense of 58,000 killed in action. Hardly a day goes by when one does not hear reference to Southeast Asia and the conflict fought there.

During the initial period of contemplation of sending U.S. troops to Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti, in turn, the outcries of "Not another Vietnam!" could be heard from citizen and statesman, alike. The analogy will always be heard and remain a part of our legacy. Not only does it reference the tremendous loss of life for naught, but also of the deceit, disgrace, and seemingly total loss of values we suffered in the hands of this "sacred" office.

Watergate proved more of the same. The act that "brought down the president" not only led to the resignation of a Commander-in-Chief, but also led to the further straining of the aura of the position. This incident associated with the seemingly simple misdemeanor of "bugging" the competition's headquarters has permanently rocked the system to the point where innuendoes such as "Whitewater" take on unquestioned meaning on the part of most Americans. Such media titles have become household terms known to parents and teenagers, alike, and simply mean, "The president is violating the law, displaying another example of the absence of values by our Chief Executive, and since he is above the law, will most likely get away with it."

The "Reagan years" -- or Reagan Years -- were earmarked with the Iran-Contra Affair. In the aftermath of this scandal we were left with another bite out of the honor and position of the office of the presidency.

The aura of the Clinton administration has been marred by a lack of confidence in the morals of our nation's leader. Allegations of moral indiscipline have been *status quo* since before President Clinton's tenure. The subject of unprecedented ridicule in the hands of television producers, comedians, columnists, et al., the office now suffers from a real or perceived breach of trust that will cast a shadow on the post for generations to come. As I sit and type these observations, the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit case once again dominates the news. There seems to be no end to the allegations against the values and example of our highest office.

The collateral damage and fallout this has on a nation is a weakening of a nation's values. Perceptions are that this represents a new standard in our value system, an acceptable choice to make when facing the decision between right and wrong. The fact that values was not a key item of discussion during the pre-election debates between the two presidential candidates is of particular note. This may be interpreted as an indicator of the new social conscious of our nation. It appears that values may be bleaching out of the personal qualifications once considered standard prerequisites for the job. Compound this with the fact that the incumbent was elected for a second term adds more salt to the wound.

November's national elections witnessed another poor voter turnout, a trend that seems to have become the norm. It may also be a good sign if one examines it from the view of a value monitor. Low voter turnout means that the public recognizes value devaluation and scam in American politics and they

want to disavow participation in the process. A good sign, but not the desirable means of bringing attention to the problem.

This is the umbrella under which our nation now lives. This sets the tone in which our children are raised and tomorrow's soldiers and military leaders are developed. This tone cannot be a good one.

### **Chipping Away at the Rock**

In peacetime, we practice tactics, strategy, and weapons firing. We must do the same with our values. We must develop the candor to display the courage to make a commitment to real competence, now, today. We can afford to do no less, for the time is short and stakes are too high.

General Donn A. Starry

Individual and organizational values can be viewed as a pyramid. Each block of the pyramid represents the tenets of values, such as *trustworthy*, *loyal*, *helpful* (from the Boy Scouts of America *Scout Promise*), or *courage*, *candor*, *competence*, *commitment* (from the U.S. Army's *Individual Values*). As long as the individual and group values remain preserved, so will the pyramid.

It is when tenets, and hence, values, are violated that the pyramid loses its sharp appearance and strength. A chip at a time, the structure crumbles and, if not checked, will disintegrate.

All of us place value or opinion on such intangibles as "truth, money, friendship, justice, human rights, or selflessness." We also place a price tag on personal sacrifice, a worth on team versus individual accomplishment, the amount of time we are willing to devote to others, and the quality of our free time. As we cannot do all things equally and with the same vigor, we are forced to make decisions between what we will do and what we will not do; between what will get our full attention and what will be ignored.<sup>7</sup>

The individual who enters the service without an appreciation for the basics of what's right and what's wrong is a candidate for shoplifting in the post exchange. If that same individual gets away with it, flaunts her/his "success," and impresses a group of fellow value-strained soldiers, there may emerge a new standard. A young noncommissioned officer or lieutenant whose own young family life lacks appreciation for human rights and family values is the individual who will someday be involved in a spouse or child abuse dilemma. The male company commander of a basic training unit who, along side and in coordination with his subordinate drill sergeants, knowingly and repetitively permits and participates in sex-for-favor relations with new female recruits is responsible for the growth of a deadly cancer in an entire military organization.

What we are starting to see in the newer generation of service members is not only people who have difficulty deciding between choices requiring self-evaluation of ingrained values, but also people that lack the basic foundations for value development. The "what's in it for me" attitude is the battle cry of a generation that places self first before the needs and enabling tasks of the unit. When the organization's needs and the individual's perception of his/her needs clash, the result is a failed unit and a failed organizational value base.

This is the environment from which we are assessing tomorrow's soldiers, sailors, airman, and Marines.

## **The Individual Devaluation**

It should be perfectly clear that any institution must know what its ideals are before it can become coherent and confident, and that there must be present in the form of clearly available ideals an imaginative conception of the good at which the institution aims.

Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall  
*The Armed Forces Officer, 1950*

While Christmas shopping in a nearby mall, I stopped by the local franchise of a popular electronics store. My mission was to purchase something for myself -- a battery for my wristwatch that had been suffering from fading digits and a squeaky alarm for over a week. Faced with crowded holiday conditions, I waited in line for ten minutes until my presence was recognized by the gentleman behind the counter. Upon explaining my needs and displaying my ancient SEIKO timepiece, I was told two things that would dominate my thoughts the remainder of that afternoon.

First, the outlet does carry the appropriate lithium battery and outlet employees are trained and equipped to open wristwatch "backs" to perform the required surgery. The next thing I was told shook my value system to its very foundation. The employee informed me that due to the large number of customers in the store -- and in the checkout line -- "they" had decided to suspend the service for the remainder of the day. I informed the man that they now had one less customer and wished him (and the other employees within earshot) a Merry Christmas.

The incident, unfortunately, is not just about a holiday shopper with a fading timepiece. What actually occurred is that this store, or at least one of its employees or a group of employees, made a conscientious decision to place greater value on the potential expenditure of others over the known

expenditure of one. In affect, value was assigned to the customers in this vignette. Intentionally or not, the signal presented me was that, at least in the eyes of this corporate giant, the customer was of no or little value. Or that the customer's value changed under a given set of conditions, in this case, operational tempo within the store balanced against the perceived monetary return from one individual. If unchecked or not acknowledged by the victim and witnesses as an isolated incident, this behavior could be perceived as a norm for our society. Since norms regulate values, the value becomes lessened.

Hours later I was able to analyze the incident with a clear mind. I saw a bad decision by a temporarily blinded store employee who simply did not see the big picture. I wondered what caused his values to become so askewed. I wondered how another customer would have reacted and the impact on that person's value base.

### **The Media -- Values on Parade**

The past thirty years has seen the media take on a new, invigorating role as the *monitor* of American values. In fact, the time period has seen the media become a decisive, active barometer of every aspect of our lives. Where once major breeches of our value system went unnoticed or were deliberately ignored by the newspapers, now the slightest indiscretion becomes front page highlights, waved like a flag for all to see.

There are four key reasons why the media has taken on a more vitalized position in our lives these past three decades. First, is the *dominance of television* as an educator and entertainment tool. In the Fifties and Sixties there was not a TV in every household, today there is almost a television in

every room. Children have TVs in their bedrooms. And they are spending measurable percentages of their day glued to said device. The television, with its 24-hour-a-day, selectable, multiple format capability, has become the media of choice for most Americans. As today's media gets at every piece of information, everyone will get the opportunity to see, hear, and digest. Because of this, indiscretions that tear at our very core values are observed by millions frequently. The impact on our youth -- and hence the writers and guardians of tomorrow's value system -- is in question.

Second, the media, especially television, has adopted the concept of *investigative reporting*. Never before has the media offered the viewer programming in which infinite details are openly displayed for the entire populace to absorb. Investigative reporting takes us beyond the front page. With wetted appetites and a desire to hear more on a subject the media has previously earmarked for continued exploitation, specialized television shows get at the very core of the indiscretion. They also display how profound and far-reaching the breach may be, and how the values of those involved, usually people of stature in our society, became eroded.

Investigative reports are of particular note to one concerned with the role of the media and its position as a *marquis*, advertising current degradation and downfall. The American population assumes that investigative reports are on par with the quality and degree of accuracy of police reports. Television networks are highly motivated to achieve and maintain a high level of credibility with the audience and advertising sponsors. A credible (read: "good") show is one that people will watch week after week. The rating system monitors this. And the show that survives the poles is the one that will receive the most revenue from the product advertisers. The system motivates

producers to gain and maintain credibility with viewers at the expense of all else.

Investigative reports are similar to police reports, but they are releasable for public consumption. As opposed to the police report, which remains in a dormant state in a sequestered, secure file, the detailed media report is there for the world to see, and to draw a conclusion.

Third, the timeliness and *immediateness* of the well-planned television report is amazing. The first shock wave to hit the American public was in the form of the daily reports from the foxholes and rice fields of Vietnam. Never before did we have the opportunity to witness both the combat and the reaction on the home front. And the nature of the war in Vietnam was something like we had never witnessed before. This was not clearly defined (as the obvious good versus the obvious evil) as had been the case in Europe during two world wars and Korea. Thanks to the media, the American viewer lost sight of the original purpose of why our troops were serving in that part of the world and slowly become disenchanted with the weekly reports of the loss of life, coupled with unrest and protest here at home.

And the Tet Offensive sealed the bid. The media told us, and Americans then realized that they had been lied to by our country's leadership. All of a sudden we were not clearly winning the war. Thousands of America's young were dying for what now appeared to be a hopeless cause, and many more would die until the conflict could be brought to closure. As satellite communication systems become more sophisticated, the immediate affect on the populace will become all the more influential. The negative impact of the Vietnam War on America's value system will always haunt us.

A fourth, but minor, reason for the increased role of the media as a monitor of the value system in America is due to the increased popularity of

the *talk show*, both on television and the radio. Like the investigative reporting show, talk shows strike at the root of the story, pitting the byline against our perception of reality, making us aware that all is not as it seems. Talk shows tend to portray that all is not as pleasant as what we have perceived through our rose-colored glasses.

The media has assumed a profound place in our society, a position it did not enjoy as recently as thirty years ago. As the reporter and evaluator of our values, the news reporter takes us to where the news is happening, presents the who, what, when, and where of the byline, and in so doing brings us closer to what is happening in our ever-shrinking world. This is good. The dark side, however, is the increased realization of what others around the country perceive as a new social standard.

### **Reality or Perception?**

We have given several examples and cited reasons for the decline of values in America, but are values really becoming lost? Some have said that values in our country are not changing or dying, but that we are simply becoming increasingly more aware of the dark side of the facets of everyday life. They say, as we have discussed, the media and its related advances in format and technology -- dominant role, investigative reporting, satellite communications, and credibility -- are now making us more aware of the world around us, including its frailties, and a decomposition which, if unharnessed, would make it appear that "Rome is falling."

Whatever the answer, reality is or can become what is perceived. We learn by what we think we see and hear. Over time, perceptions may become

reality. Sometimes we decide to accept as our own that which we have seen others accept, because it may be an easier alternative.

A recent article in NEWSWEEK magazine expounded on the growing prevalence of extramarital relations in the United States. It is as though married males and females in North America have adopted a form of *machismo*, that form of infidelity so prevalent among the peoples of Central and South America. It is so common among males in countries south of our border and has been accepted by generations of victimized wives that adulterous behavior has become a standard in that part of the world. Generation after generation of males have practiced the sin that, in their minds, it no longer carries the stigmatism of deceit, cheating, and dishonesty.

Will this devaluation of a social norm become *status quo* in our nation?

## **Conclusion**

We should be willing to assume that most men have sufficient desire to live a moral life, that they will profit from instruction that helps them to become more alert to ethical issues, and to apply their moral values more carefully and rigorously to the ethical dilemmas they encounter in their professional lives.

Derek C. Bok  
Change, "Can Ethics Be Taught?" 1976

Time will show that the American society and, hence, those entering military service, are undergoing a change in values that may be characterized by the words *degradation* and *loss*. We have seen examples where values are no longer taught in the home or by organizations in our society in the same way or to the same standard as they were prior to the Vietnam War. That conflict

witnessed a marked change in the ways we view our national leadership, our educational system, our military, and the family.

It is possible, although unlikely, that what we have witnessed in the American value system over the past thirty years is only a *change* in values. This change may be called an upgrade, although that is not what the average, conservative American would call them. More correctly, the change in values we have observed should more correctly be labeled as a renovation or renewal.

It appears that standards have changed. Things are simply different now than in years past. As with previous generations, we have abhorred the example and lifestyle of those before. But, yet, life goes on. A new standard emerges with which society is comfortable. Americans are satisfied, if not thrilled, with their way of life.

In view of this actual or imagined change, the strategic, operational, and tactical leader will, in the future, take on an increased role as mentor, guide, and teacher of the values necessary to sustain the unique aura required of the men and women of the armed forces.

## **Recommendation**

The relationship between officers and men should in no sense be that of superior and inferior nor that of master and servant, but rather that of teacher and scholar. In fact, it should partake of the nature of the relation between father and son, to the extent that officers, especially commanding officers, are responsible for the physical, mental, and moral welfare, as well as the discipline and military training, of the young men under their command.

General John A. Lejeune  
*Marine Corps Manual, 1920*

In order for future strategic, operational, and tactical leaders to be the mentors, teachers, and monitors of values in their organizations, they

must have a well thought out and aggressive plan of execution. One such approach is contained in the excellent, but often ignored, Army Field Manual 22-100, *Military Leadership*. Actively used for instructional purposes in our formal schools and found in almost every leader's professional library, this leader handbook has been ignored as a living document in the field. Its pages walk us through a simple but detailed scheme of maneuver that the leader may use to guide both action and training session in order to raise the value quotient in any organization.

The plan is simple. First, leaders must have a basic understanding of the interrelationships of *beliefs, values, and norms*. These terms aid us in getting our arms around this intangible subject and assist us in putting labels on our feelings and behavior. The manual goes on to help us learn the importance of each and, more importantly, how to influence the comportment of the three.

Next, FM 22-100 assists us in grasping the concept of *character*. The link between values and actual behavior, character is the heart and soul of the importance of values in our profession. Understanding its importance, how it becomes a property of an individual, and how to modify character in the case of the "problem" soldier are skills required of the effective combat leader.

The third challenge for the commissioned and noncommissioned officer is defining and mentoring the ethics of our profession. The Army expresses four, and it is paramount that our subordinates see these traits in their leaders and maintain them within themselves. *Loyalty, duty, selfless service, and integrity* must be found in both the leader and the led. The leader must be a role model, otherwise he or she will be perceived as a hypocrite and deceiver. Subordinates, if they do not ascribe to ethical behavior, must be taught to

alter their behavioral pattern. The leader's personal contact, honest demeanor, and obvious support of the values of nation and organization must prevail.

The leader must also be of the nature to know how not to place subordinates in ethical dilemmas. Fostering a "zero defect" command climate and one in which superiors habitually hear only what their subordinates think they want to hear is breeding ground for cancer and mission failure, let alone the impact on the next generation of leaders.

The critical challenge, and one that strategic leaders must always be aware of, is that new leaders must possess basic, traditional values themselves. This will require diligent oversight and may prove to be the most formidable task some leaders will face. Tomorrow's leaders will be a product of the value *status quo* emerging today and changing -- degrading? -- all the time. Leader development must be a continuous quest on the part of the senior. Examples of young officer professional development used in several units in United States Army-Europe have taken on the titles "Time With Lieutenants" and "Lieutenants Lyceum." These were monthly gatherings of a battalion commander and his most junior officers to discuss issues facing the commissioned officer. Often disguised as tactical and "standard" leader training sessions, they were actually mentoring sessions where the junior participants could observe, listen, and maybe learn.

Although alluded to several times, it would be an error not to dedicate a few lines to the concept of *mentorship*. Teaching by example, whether one intends to do so or not, can be the most valued and rewarding method of developing fellow soldiers-at-arms. A poll of successful, contemporary senior officers and NCOs would undoubtedly reveal that being the recipient of deliberate or collateral mentorship was the singular most important factor in

their development as a military leader. The power of learning by example, both the good and the bad, is extraordinary in our profession. We must always remember that training leaders may be the most important thing that we, as strategic leaders, do. Taking on the characteristics of a legacy, leadership training and mentorship is the only thing that remains.

The task facing senior strategic, operational, and tactical leaders to maintain the values critical to and characteristic of our armed services will be a great one, but one that can be successfully prepared for. The challenge ahead is best summarized in Military Leadership where it is written:

The character you want to instill in your soldiers, and should attempt to exhibit in the daily example you set, should be consistent with the values of courage, candor, competence, and commitment. For this reason, leading and training soldiers well must begin with their induction into service. When they begin their [military] training, individuals are prepared for change, and since most want to do well, they are willing to adopt the stressed [military] values. All leaders need a good program for integrating new soldiers into their unit. As a leader, you must teach and demonstrate the right values and norms of working, training, and living.<sup>8</sup>

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-68, *White Paper 1986*, "The Bedrock of Our Profession," p. 5.
- <sup>2</sup> Department of the Army Field Manual 22-100, *Military Leadership*, p. 23.
- <sup>3</sup> *White Paper 1986*, p. 5.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Military Leadership*, p. 29.
- <sup>6</sup> *Carlisle Patriot News*, "Scout program to teach pupils values," 29 December 1996, p. 1.
- <sup>7</sup> *Military Leadership*, p. 23.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.



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