



O T E S

from AUSA's Institute of Land Warfare

Values

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Values are the cornerstone of an effective military. The drawdown of forces has placed increasing responsibilities and demands upon units, leaders and soldiers. The effective accomplishment of today's missions in response to these demands depends upon our values.

Field Manual 22-100, *Military Leadership*, defines values as "attitudes about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or things." I take values to be the means by which we prioritize our choices. In today's Army we face a myriad of choices: some easy, some difficult, some right, and some clearly wrong. Recent press reports have emphasized the consequences of poor choices resulting from poor values. Like apples, one poor value can spoil the whole bunch.

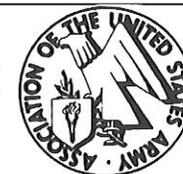
We of the United States military took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, our national symbol of values. When we took this oath, we committed ourselves to a higher standard and to a higher

set of values. We must demand these values of ourselves and those around us; our nation expects and deserves nothing less.

Courage, integrity, candor, loyalty, commitment, selfless service and competence are some of these very critical values. Courage is not just the physical courage of overcoming fear of bodily harm; it is also moral courage. We must stand up for what we believe is right, even when it may not be in our own best interest. We must also have the courage to admit when we are wrong, identify our weaknesses, and take actions to correct them. Moral courage builds our integrity. When we say we can get the job done, we must. The confidence of our leaders, peers and subordinates depends upon their trust in us. We must also not be afraid to be tactfully candid and honest with others; quite often the stakes are too high.

We must be loyal to our nation, the Army, our unit and our soldiers, placing their needs above our own. This commitment will result

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in doing our best and working our hardest to accomplish the mission together. We must also have the skills and knowledge necessary to perform all of our duties accurately and effectively. Competence in our duties and the teaching of these skills to others results in the completion and the continuation of the mission. We must place the needs of our unit and the needs of our soldiers above the choices we might personally prefer to make. This is selfless service.

These are some of the values towards which we must all strive on a daily basis. The process is not always easy, but it is necessary if we are to become effective leaders and effective human beings. With solid values, our mission will be accomplished and the welfare of our soldiers insured. With strong values, we will make the right choice, even when the right choice is the more difficult.