



Pfc. Brian Roth, a distribution company vehicle driver, is awarded the Combat Action Badge from Col. Tim McAteer at Al Asad Airbase, Iraq. Roth earned the award for his actions during a roadside bomb attack on his vehicle while on a unit resupply mission. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Nancy Lugo)

Maturing Our Leaders in the Warrior Ethos

■ By Col. Robert L. Hatcher Jr.

The Army is an amazing organization in many respects. One aspect that stands out prominently is how it builds a homogeneous warrior culture from the vast array of cultural backgrounds that come into it.

A second profound aspect of the Army is how thoroughly it addresses problems. Instilled discipline nested

in the foundation of the Army Values and Warrior Ethos gives rise to the far-reaching capability to defend our nation.

This discipline is facilitated by Army characteristics such as the unreserved submission to civilian leadership, the complete accountability to authority, the widespread study of problem-solving and decision-

making, and the tenacious determination to accomplish all mission objectives.

The Army's Warrior Ethos has remained steadfast while Army leaders have developed in a manner that reflects the social issues of U.S. culture. The Army's responses to debated cultural topics have allowed it to meet objective goals and

have remained compatible with its fighting and disciplined force.

Issues such as racism, moral character, equality, female Soldier occupations, and recently, sexual harassment and assault continue to find their logical conclusions in the military. The Army's professional

the Army brings them into direct contact with the Soldier's Creed and the Warrior Ethos embedded in its words. Adopted in its current format in 2003, it resonates with veterans from all eras. The creed captures the essence of soldiering incredibly well, and the principal components of a Soldier's subsequent actions can be traced to these words.

We incorporate into every activity and facet of thinking the fact that a Soldier will always place the mission first, never accept defeat, never quit, and never leave a fallen comrade. As we live these words and apply them to our behavior, we influence the people we contact.

The nation's social issues change, and the military has to identify the effects of those issues on policy and procedures. When women in combat units were prohibited by law, both cultural changes and battlefield geography shaped U.S. attitudes on the subject.

Many service members felt that they were living a lie under the "don't ask, don't tell" policy and violating the very values that were required of them. The Army's cultural heritage may have been more of the impediment to allowing women to attend Ranger school than other more relevant factors.

A Leader's Duty

Mark Twain said, "Do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest." Leaders are the principal proponent for those they lead, and their actions should be routine, not astonishing.

Leaders actively seek to align behavior to their professional ethic and the Warrior Ethos. Leaders understand that people adhere to expected behavior because of a reward or the fear of punishment or because it is as deeply seated as a closely held belief.

A leader's goal should be to move the behavior from enforced adherence to rules to a more natural and desired conviction. Leaders start by

modeling behavior and enforcing it with subordinates. For all leaders, "audio must match video." Additionally, we have to exhibit the moral courage to report or correct infractions among all ranks.

Early in my career, I witnessed officers lie to a senior officer, and even while I found it shocking, I made no move to correct it. The lie was obvious and the subsequent result—stern and loud corrective counseling—enforced how wrong it was and fixed those lessons deeply into my way of thinking.

I have witnessed senior leaders request obvious violations of ethical conduct on more than one occasion, such as the misuse of a government credit card or the reporting of a lost sensitive item as a "combat loss." Those requests were ignored or advised against, and we were able to achieve the desired effect by legal means. Recognizing that situations with no ethical, positive outcome may arise, a leader has to decide to take the moral high ground regardless of consequences.

Violations of honesty or integrity are no different from violations of respect and decency. Hazing, harassment, and equal opportunity violations have no place in an orderly, trained, and ready Army in which Soldiers must trust one another. Living with honor and high standards of character and discipline are enduring requirements.

Unacceptable behavior in my squad or office place must be remedied. Backed by the Warrior Ethos, the Army has an unassailable position of leadership and respect in the world.

The strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. This is what makes us Army Strong!

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Warrior Ethos

- I will always place the mission first.
- I will never accept defeat.
- I will never quit.
- I will never leave a fallen comrade.

force—enabled by submission, accountability, problem-solving, and determination—takes no prisoners and accepts nothing less than success once a decision is made.

Ethics and Morals

I have witnessed an incredible evolution in the Army on social matters and the indisputable importance of ethical and moral behavior in the workplace and on the battlefield. A false or exaggerated report can misallocate resources, creating distrust and placing units at risk.

Likewise, sexual harassment and assault undermines readiness and trust among Soldiers, the U.S. public, and host-nation citizens. Therefore, the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program is a logical priority for the Army.

Soldiers' first introduction into