

A Fighting Heart for the Army's New Look

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Editor's note: This article first appeared in the April 1955 edition of *Military Review*. The article is presented in its original style, unedited by our staff.

The views expressed in this article are the author's and are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the Command and General Staff College.—The Editor.

As we stride breathlessly and enthusiastically from the age of atomic weapons into the thermonuclear era, let us pause just long enough to devote some overdue consideration to our greatest potential weapon—the morale of our fighting soldier. Without this weapon all others are impotent. If we devote the same measure of effort to developing this weapon that we expend in developing others, we shall be invincible. Is that worth pausing for? If you agree that it is, then join me in some soul-searching and watch out for the chips, because we shall let them fall where they may.

Each officer and noncommissioned officer in today's Army who deserves the title of leader or commander carries in the upper strata of his mind a constant awareness that the morale of his subordinates is the key to success in any military endeavor. Recognizing this, he strives, within the limits of his capabilities, to improve morale. All too frequently his efforts are remedial rather than preventative. In many cases his

capabilities are restricted by inadequate training and experience or by his lack of one or more of the principal attributes of a successful leader. Often the morale of his troops is influenced by conditions which are beyond the leader's control.

Morale and Esprit

My purpose is to examine those agencies, activities, and conditions which influence the morale of the soldier, and which are within our Nation's ability to control, in order to evolve recommended measures for improving the standard of morale in our Army. Combat is the real test of a soldier's morale, and so it is toward the attitudes and reactions of the fighting soldier that my treatment of this subject is oriented. Nevertheless, my approach is influenced by the fact that a soldier's behavior during the ordeal of combat can be greatly influenced by the attitudes he acquires before he arrives in the combat zone. Because the two are so highly interrelated and interdependent, it is impractical to talk about morale without also discussing esprit de corps. How does morale compare to the other elements which go to make up the might of a nation's army? Napoleon paid tribute to the importance of morale by proclaiming, "In

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war, morale conditions make up threequarters of the game; the relative balance of manpower accounts only for the remaining quarter.” The great military leaders of more recent warfare appear to support Napoleon’s theory. Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery has stated, “High morale is a pearl of great price. The more I see of fighting, the more I am convinced that the big thing in war is morale.” His colorful contemporary, General George S. Patton, Jr., said, “My theory is that a commander does what is necessary to accomplish his mission and that nearly 80 percent of his mission is to arouse morale in his men.”

Innumerable examples could be cited wherein an upsurge of morale and esprit has turned the tide of battle or predetermined its outcome. Tolstoy, in his *War and Peace*, very aptly pays tribute to these intangible weapons which so frequently represent the balance of power in battle.

In warfare, the force of armies is the product of the mass multiplied by something else, an unknown “x.” Military science, seeing in history an immense number of examples in which the mass of an army does not correspond with its force, as in which small numbers conquer large ones, vaguely recognizes the existence of this unknown factor, and tries to find it sometimes in some geometrical disposition of the troops, sometimes in superiority of weapons, and most often in the genius of the leaders. But none of these factors yield results that agree with the historical facts. “X” is the spirit of the army, the greater or less desire to fight and to face dangers on the part of all the men composing the army, which is quite apart from the question whether they are fighting under leaders of genius or not, with cudgels or with guns that fire 80 times a minute.

Leadership

Leadership is the greatest single influence on morale. Let us teach all potential leaders how to exercise that influence.

Even the most cursory examination of the causes of high or low morale among combat troops reveals the predominating influence of the leader on morale. **Our service schools continue to emphasize the technical rather than the human aspects of combat leadership training.** Leadership must encompass an acute awareness of all elements—tangible and intangible—which affect the morale of troops. What is more, leadership must embrace the capability of dealing with all of these

elements in order to improve the morale of troops. In addition to providing inspiration by means of personal example, the combat leader must provide understanding, a respect for the dignity of the individual, security, relief, justice, body comforts, training, and an almost unending list of contributions which directly influence morale and esprit. Therefore, it follows that we who would be leaders must be taught not only what a leader is, but what he must do and how he can do it. Nearly every official act of a leader during combat influences morale directly or indirectly.

No single condition, agency, or activity possesses the potential of exerting direct, immediate, and widespread influence on morale and esprit which is possessed by the combat leader.

I am confident that our top commanders and the custodians of our personnel records will agree with me that a complete inventory of qualified combat leaders in the Army or its Reserve components is an impossible task. I am equally confident that they will agree that the supply—could it be established—does not, nor ever will, meet the demand. True, we can point out a relatively few among all ranks who have proved their leadership qualifications. Others have attained a hold on this distinction by a single feat or through the medium of publicity—some deservedly, others perhaps not. But where the true combat leader is most sorely needed, where his influence is the greatest, and where he is needed in the greatest number, the shortage is the most acute. I refer to the lower echelons of the combat elements where the influence of leadership on the soldier, who is undergoing his greatest ordeal, is the most direct.

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Many officers and noncommissioned officers assigned in recent years to positions of leadership in combat have demonstrated their technical and tactical proficiency. However, a far smaller number displayed any degree of awareness of their power to influence morale and how to wield that power. Many of the latter would have been outstanding leaders had they possessed a knowledge of the rudiments of human leadership and an intelligent respect for the human factor.

The mere fact that our great American combat leaders in recent wars have stood out in such sharp focus is not only a tribute to them, but also a startling revelation that their number was small in proportion to the American forces involved. Perhaps even more startling is the fact that the demand for good combat leaders could not even be satisfied in the localized Korean conflict. If the deficiency was so acute for such a limited engagement, how painful will it be in any future global war? Nevertheless, with the present human resources available to the Army, we can increase significantly the output of both acceptable and outstanding combat leaders if we approach the training problem realistically.

Training

One certainly cannot say that the average senior Army officer, who is in a position to make or influence decisions, policies, and plans, is not acutely aware of the importance of training in leadership and of the value of high morale among troops. But it can be claimed that little more than lip service is paid to these highly important and related matters in our Army school system and unit training programs. Leadership and morale are unquestionably subjects which, based on psychology, do not appear to fit smoothly into the orderly and practical regimen of military training with such ease as do rifle marksmanship and close order drill.

Many of my contemporaries feel that we acquired in combat an understanding of a soldier's attitudes and reactions and how to influence them. How complete our understanding is we cannot know. The fact remains that we acquired this learning the hard way. And so have thousands of officers and noncommissioned officers in recent years learned about the human factor in the harsh atmosphere of combat. Much of this knowledge has been acquired at great cost to the individual,

to the Army, and to the Nation. How much better armed would be our country if its military leaders of all ranks went into battle forearmed with this vital knowledge?

The following thesis governed teaching at the Canadian School of Infantry during World War II:

War is won by morale, fire, and movement in combination. They must, therefore, be studied together. Morale, which expresses itself in the aggressive spirit, is the only motive power in the face of the enemy—at least in a forward direction—that the war machine possesses. Without it, tactical conceptions are just academic wishful thinking, for they will not be implemented on the battlefield. Without it, your men will not move forward. The maintenance of our morale and the breaking down of that of the enemy, therefore, requires to be our first task. ...

Now, let us examine briefly the emphasis placed on morale and leadership in the training of combat leaders in the United States Army. More officers are trained at The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia—to occupy positions of leadership in combat—than at any other Army school. The present Program of Instruction for the Infantry Officer Candidate Course reveals that out of a total of 968 hours of instruction, only 18 are devoted to the subject of “Military Command and Leadership.” Only in this brief period is any instruction directed specifically at morale and leadership—and part of this time is given to such remotely related subjects as “Public Information” and “Problems of Training.” Although other periods of this 18-hour block are indirectly related to the combat situation, only 2 hours are devoted directly to “Command and Leadership Problems in Combat.”

By way of comparison, the same program assigns 24 hours to instruction in “Drill and Command,” during which the student is taught close order drill of the platoon and how to develop a good command voice. It is perhaps facetious—yet nevertheless pertinent—to recall that one of our greatest combat leaders—General Patton—attained that distinction more as a result of his devout interest in the individual soldier than as a result of his good command voice.

The Infantry School Program of Instruction for the Associate Infantry Company Officer Course allots 12 hours out of a total of 660 to “Command and Leadership,” while 29 hours are given to personnel administration and 37 hours to logistics.

The 1,496-hour Infantry Officer Advanced Course allocates 20 hours to “Command and Leadership,” as compared to 37 hours for personnel administration.

Admittedly, a military leader must be proficient in the technical aspects of his profession. He must know weapons, their characteristics, capabilities, and limitations. But more important, he must know men, their characteristics, capabilities, and limitations if he will be a leader in every sense of the word. Ask a few questions—as I did—of officers who have led in combat; ask them what proportion of their time during combat was devoted to the morale, esprit, and welfare of their men as compared with other activities. Without exception, the proportion is far greater. Ask them, now that they are out of combat, if they have since thought of measures they could have taken—but did not—to improve morale and esprit on various occasions. The only answer I received was “yes.” Why must we learn the hard way and often too late?

Finally, ask them if anyone has ever solicited their opinions, experiences, and solutions relating to morale problems in combat. The answer is “no.”

The Army is remiss in its failure to assemble and use the volume of valuable morale and leadership lessons available in the experiences of combat veterans.

The Army’s research agencies spend large sums of money in conducting studies of vital interest to the service. But there is very little evidence that the Army has ever initiated research in the field of combat troop morale. We constantly seek new weapons and new methods for waging war. To this end we spend millions of dollars annually in research, development, and testing. Yet, we all but ignore the fact that the weapons and methods we seek can be no more effective than the men who must employ them.

Type of Training

Instruction in morale, esprit, and leadership in all Army service schools and unit schools must be given the emphasis it deserves, from the standpoint of time allotted, direction of effort, and quality of instruction.

Such instruction must be oriented toward combat. Combat is the end toward which all activities of the Army are oriented—directly or indirectly. A more equitable allocation of time to these subjects can be attained by a redistribution of time among other subjects in the

curriculum. Such a redistribution can be based upon a survey among experienced leaders to determine where emphasis is improperly placed. Find out from them how much time and effort they have devoted to the various activities and duties in which they have received instruction. Determine from their testimony whether they spent more time in morale activities than in filling out personnel forms or in exercising their command voices. Also find out which of these activities contributed most to the successful accomplishment of their missions.

Training in morale, esprit, and leadership should not be restricted to the junior officer, officer candidate, or noncommissioned officer. New lessons are learned from each conflict and even during peacetime. As an officer advances in the Army and proceeds from combat to noncombat assignments, his knowledge of the human aspect requires refreshing against the day when he will again assume the role of combat leader. It must also be remembered that as an officer advances to higher command, his influence on the soldier is exercised more and more indirectly through his subordinate officers. All too frequently, in our ardent attention to the morale of the soldier, we are prone to overlook the morale of our subordinate officers. Morale is contagious, be it high or low. In a unit, morale and esprit depend greatly upon confidence in the leader. Thus, good leadership involves not only the influencing of enlisted men, but of all subordinates. Therefore, the highest commander must possess the same attributes as the good junior leader and must apply them throughout the chain of command.

Nor should training in morale, esprit, and leadership be restricted to the combat arms. The human factor is present in all Army activities and, more important, in any future large-scale conflict, modern weapons will extend the battle area so that more and more of our support personnel will be subjected to the stresses and morale effects of the combat environment. Not all of our potential leaders in the Army enjoy the advantages of formal training in one or more of our service schools. Therefore, this instruction must be injected into our unit training and our unit schools such as we choose to call “leader schools” or “noncommissioned officers’ schools.”

The Human Factor

Having determined the fair amount of time to be devoted to these “human factor” subjects in our

training programs, what are the next steps in establishing a realistic and profitable course of instruction? The first task is to assemble the wealth of available instructional material pertaining to morale and esprit which exists in the form of surveys, texts, and in the experiences of combat veterans.

During World War II, a civilian and military group in the Troop Information and Education Division of the War Department undertook an extensive, worldwide survey of the attitudes and reactions of individual American soldiers and junior leaders and the effects of these attitudes and reactions on unit accomplishments. The volumes of this survey, together with such valuable texts as S. L. A. Marshall's *Men Against Fire*, possess a store of proved facts and recommendations relating to the human factor in warfare. Here are men who, with adequate time and singleness of purpose, have recorded the information which we in the Army need. However, this is not enough. Still unrecorded and unevaluated are the thousands of experiences, situations, solutions—good and bad—conclusions, and recommendations which rest in the memories of soldiers of all ranks from Korea and World War II. We must act before these memories fade.

Operations Research Office should be charged immediately with undertaking a comprehensive survey and study designed to assemble, in usable form, the mass of information relating to morale, esprit, and leadership which is possessed by combat veterans of all ranks in the Army.

This agency, with the wholehearted assistance of our service schools and major commands, can do the job if given the priority this project demands.

Next, from this recommended Operations Research Office study and from other recognized works on these subjects, we must glean all pertinent facts, conclusions, and recommendations and use them as the basis for a realistic and profitable course of instruction for all leaders and potential leaders of all ranks and branches in the Army.

What must a leader know about the human factor in combat? I shall not attempt, in the limits of this article, to answer that question completely. But, among other things, he must learn how soldiers react to various combat stresses and what can be done to prevent or minimize adverse reactions. He must learn that men can actually fall asleep in the middle of an intense fire fight. He must be acquainted with the attitudes of

thousands of World War II soldiers and junior leaders before, during, and after combat and how these attitudes were reflected in the accomplishments of their units. Believe it or not, this knowledge is available.

The potential leader should know that thousands of Korean combat infantry veterans chose as the most significant common denominator of a good fellow squad member that "he contribute to unit motivation in such ways as shouting encouragement during a fire fight or by joking or singing when things looked dark."

The student must also learn the value of respect for the individual soldier and his dignity; that discipline in today's Army is based upon mutual confidence and respect between leader and subordinates and is not purely a manifestation of authority. He must learn the meaning and application of morale courage. He must learn the indices of changing morale and how to recognize them. He must be given the advantage of the thousands of actions already taken by imaginative and resourceful leaders in combat to improve morale and esprit and to provide motivation. These are only a few isolated facts that a future unit leader could employ to ensure the most effective training, orientation, and organization of his unit for combat and he should acquire this knowledge before he assumes his first command.

Such courses of instruction, to be interesting, must avoid the technical. It is not necessary for us to learn what mental or physical processes, glands, or brain cells cause a soldier to react in a certain manner to a particular stress, depressant, or stimulus—leave that to the scientists. We must start with the accepted facts that a soldier does react in such fashions and learn how to prevent or counteract unfavorable reactions and how to stimulate desired reactions. Such courses of instruction should make liberal use of the panel type of instruction, inviting veterans of all ranks—including both the leaders and the led—to participate in free discussions.

The final step is to ensure that improved instruction in morale, esprit, and leadership is made available to all units for use in unit training in unit schools. Service schools should be charged with providing lesson plans or brochures to all field units.

Much of the petty criticism and resentment directed at the Army today—both privately and publicly—finds its source in former soldiers who served under one or more leaders who apparently lacked an understanding of the human factor. How much of this aftereffect of

war could have been avoided had our leadership training and our general knowledge of and respect for the human factor been adequate? I believe we could have avoided the harmful effects of the Doolittle Board and other measures aimed at “democratizing” our Army. Sound leadership training of our present and potential officers and noncommissioned officers will be a major step toward restoring the prestige and authority of our junior leaders which is a sorely needed measure.

Esprit de Corps

A boost to the esprit de corps of Army units is a boost to the morale of each team member.

There is no need here to develop the value of esprit de corps to the building of an effective fighting unit. High esprit in a unit will often overcome the individual morale problems of its members. Esprit is nothing more than a manifestation of confidence of men in each other and in their leaders. The indices of high esprit are pride in the unit, its history, its achievements, and its outstanding members. Here is the real team spirit which is by no means peculiar to the Army or to any military organization.

In all wars, esprit has caused many units to do more than their share. And in these units have been individuals whose morale was impaired but who, nevertheless, did their share because of their loyalty to the team. Unit pride among infantrymen has most frequently and lastingly centered itself in the regiment; among artillerymen, armored troops, and engineers in the battalion. The development of high esprit is a constant objective of the commanders of such units because it pays off in battle just as it pays off on the football field. To the individual soldier, the sense of belonging to such a team, enjoying the association and respect of its members, and sharing in its history-making achievements, is both motivation and morale stimulant.

Shortsighted Army policy over the years has prevented our attaining the optimum of morale and esprit in our combat units, first, by failing to preserve our famous fighting units and their traditions; second, by an impractical approach to the problems of combat rotation and replacement; and, third, by failing to provide the combat arms soldier with a home in the Army and a sense of belonging.

Seldom, if ever, at the outbreak of a war, have we known which of our units would become involved.

Naturally, it fell to the lot of those units closest to the flame, or in the best state of preparedness, to strike the initial blow. Right from the start, the harried commanders of these units have had to face the problem of developing esprit and intense pride in the unit—usually among men who had just joined the unit to bring it to fighting strength. Losses among these units have been filled by individual strangers who, in many cases, have never heard of the unit before joining it. In battle there is little opportunity to inculcate these strangers with pride in the unit, its history, and its achievements.

Many of our famous fighting units—those with long histories of prideful achievement—have been inactivated for long periods of time between wars or during wars, or isolated in some inconspicuous assignment in the Zone of Interior. It sometimes appears that misguided economy or administrative convenience has ruled our heads and our hearts.

The Army has belatedly recognized the harmful effects of individual rotation on both the soldier and on the combat unit he joins. It has recently developed the 4-man team replacement package and is striving toward unit replacement by platoons. There is still much more that the Army can do without prohibitive cost in manpower and dollars.

Every soldier, from his recruitment to his discharge, desires to be identified with a unit—and a famous one, if possible. The Army can and must provide the combat arms soldier with a home in the Army. The British Army has adhered to this principle of esprit under economic restrictions far more austere than ours. They have also adhered to the principle of maintaining their famous fighting units in active status through the centuries. Their units are steeped in tradition and battle honors and identified by distinctive dress, insignia, nicknames, colors, and mottos. All officers and other ranks of the combat arms are members of these units as long as they are in the British Army and their unit's history becomes a part of them just as they become a part of the unit. The examples of British unit esprit in battle need no recounting. I do not imply that American units have never developed unit esprit in battle. I simply point out that a British unit goes into battle with a ready-made esprit.

Here is what we can do to improve unit esprit and morale in our fighting units. **First, the Army should activate and perpetuate as many as possible of the**

famous old fighting units of each of the combat arms, even at the expense of eliminating newer unit designations.

George Fielding Eliot points out that: *The strength of an army—its soul for that matter—resides in its fighting units. The central objective to which all planning at the highest level should be directed is the production and preservation of these fighting units; the regiments and separate battalions of infantry, artillery, armored troops, and engineers upon whose prideful performance in the hour of peril the safety of the nation is staked.*

We should not leave these units lying in mothballs or on the shelf as we have the famous 3d Infantry Regiment, *The Old Guard*, which has escorted live and dead dignitaries at our Nation's capital, while newer units with far less tradition have added battle streamers to their colors in Korea. Let us capitalize—as the British have done—on the traditions and color of these old units. An administrative problem to be sure, but esprit de corps will ring up the profits in combat.

Let us put combat rotation and replacement on a fair and realistic basis by holding the replacement package at the 4- or 6-man team, by extending the tour of duty in the combat zone, and by more frequent rotation of units into reserve.

We have already eliminated the “orphan of the storm”—that bewildered individual combat replacement who wanders homeless and friendless through our impersonal replacement pipeline. The 4- or 6-man replacement team is the best answer. Unit replacement by squad or larger unit will never fill the bill. First, losses in combat will disrupt any unit rotation procedure and adversely affect morale. What can you do with newly joined members of a unit due for rotation which will be fair to them and fair to others? Second, any commander will immediately leaven a newly arrived unit with combat veterans. This, too, will preclude smooth operation of the unit replacement program. Since the squad is the smallest tactical unit and most frequently the basis of patrol action, it, too, must include men with battle experience. It, therefore, follows that the 4- or 6-man team is the largest which can be integrated into a fighting command without disturbing orderly rotation procedure and without requiring a redistribution of combat experienced personnel.

Rotation is a necessary evil. It provides the combat soldier with a horizon. It protects his morale against

that feeling of inevitability which pervades the mind after a prolonged period of combat. This is the feeling that “sooner or later, I'm going to get it.” However, we have gone overboard in our rotation policy to the extent that tactical efficiency of units has been impaired. The most practical answer is to increase the over-all period of duty in the combat zone and, at the same time, provide as frequent rotation of units into reserve as the situation will permit. We have not always done the latter at each echelon of command.

The Plan

It is within our present capabilities to give every combat arms soldier a permanent home in the Army—and one of which he can be proud. The plan I shall discuss in relation to the infantry applies equally to the other combat arms. Simply stated, it is this. **Every combat arms soldier—officer and enlisted—should be permanently assigned to a unit which has both a home depot and an overseas, or “combat-ready” element.**

For every infantry division and regiment overseas or scheduled for overseas movement, there should be a training division and regiment with the same numerical designations in the Zone of Interior. Soldiers should be assigned to these regiments in their 4- or 6-man teams after completing basic training. In the home depot of the regiment, along with unit training, they will be steeped in the traditions, history, ceremonies, and other martial color which is a part of their regiment. The home regiment will furnish replacement teams as required to its overseas element. Thus, the combat replacement would travel with his teammates to a fighting unit of which he is already a member and in which he already has pride.

Upon return from combat, the veteran will rejoin his home unit, either in a training role, for processing, or for reassignment to a staff or branch immaterial job elsewhere. In all future troop assignments he will serve with his own regiment. He will always wear its insignia. These regiments will not draw personnel from one particular region of the country. Experiences of National Guard units in World War II revealed the effect of heavy battle losses from one locality. Rather, these regiments will be filled with a cross-section of the country's manpower, both geographically and qualitatively.

I recognize that such a plan is not foolproof. There will be occasions when unusually heavy losses by the

overseas unit cannot be satisfied by its home depot. Therefore, it may be necessary to establish at least one independent training division at home to meet such emergencies and possibly to meet the requirements of independent units or newly formed units and task forces.

Motivation

American society has shirked its responsibility for providing proper motivation to the future soldier.

There is a fine but distinct line which separates the motivating factor from the morale stimulant. Motivation provides man with the will to do something he would not otherwise do or to do that thing with greater enthusiasm than he would otherwise do it. In battle, it is the force which makes him keep moving and—on occasion—to do more than his assigned duties demand. On the other hand, the morale stimulant simply makes adversity more bearable. The man who is strongly motivated has few morale problems. For example, the man who fights to avenge his brother's death at the hands of the enemy is far more immune to combat stresses and morale depressants than the man who lacks strong motivation.

It is well within the capabilities of the Army to provide morale stimuli to its soldiers—even in the battle area. The capabilities of the Army to provide motivation to the soldier who is about to enter battle are far more restricted. It is within the capabilities of American society and civilian agencies to stimulate the morale of the fighting soldier before and during combat. **But more noteworthy is the fact that it is well within the capabilities of our social institutions to provide motivation to our fighting men before they enter battle and even before they enter the Army. In the exercise of this last capability, we Americans have failed.**

It is indeed a lamentable commentary upon our American educational system, our news media, and particularly upon American parental guidance which General Omar Bradley, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, expressed in the following words:

Despite the opportunities for free education that exist in these United States, too many young men come into the Army appallingly ill-informed on the issues and crises that warrant their service. American education has failed to give many young men an alert appreciation of their liberties

and a consequent explanation of their obligations. We have taught our young people how to plunder our resources, how to get jobs, how to get rich. We have neglected to tell them that democracy is a 2-way street—that with its benefits comes the necessity for also giving service.

Is it not the mission of American education to prepare the child and adolescent to become a useful citizen in a democratic way of life with an awareness of his privileges and his obligations? If so, American education has not accomplished that mission. In this generation, millions of young men found that the way of life for which they had supposedly been prepared, took them to battlefields all over the world. The Army did all it could in the brief time allowed to prepare them. Our educational institutions did not do their share in the preparation. I am pointing the finger at our educational institutions, our news media, and particularly at American parental guidance. In the foreseeable future, more millions of men and women will find themselves in the Armed Forces, perhaps not in battle, but preparing for battle. Our social institutions must accept their share of the preparation.

Our children—as soon as they are capable of absorbing such knowledge—must be taught the underlying basis of our country's foreign policy and its associated military policy. If the comic book technique is the most effective media, let us accept it—some of our churches already have. I do not propose that our schools and informational media glorify military service. However, I do propose that they treat it with the respect that it deserves and demands. A course in current affairs which treats with foreign and military policies, current defense activities, and the aims and activities of hostile governments should be required in all high schools and higher educational institutions.

Our annual defense appropriations are the greatest financial burden borne by the American public. Economy measures are constantly applied with public support to lessen that burden. And yet, a part of these appropriations are used by the Army to teach the new soldier "Why you are in the Army" and "Why the Army is in Korea." This teaching must be conducted in the already too-short time available for training the new soldier in his job. Furthermore, his reaction is most frequently, "So what? I'm in the Army. Why tell me now?" Why should the Army, under a decreasing budget, foot the bill for society's failure?

I recommend that our new Department of Health, Education, and Welfare be charged with the task of bringing our educational institutions into line and assisting them to discharge their full responsibilities under a Democracy. I further recommend that the Army having the most to gain start the ball rolling by soliciting the aid of the other services, news media, the President, the Congress, and the churches in order to ensure the strongest possible unified support of this project.

With the natural American favoritism for the underdog and a natural militant resentment toward “our guys getting pushed around,” our young people, if given the facts of the matter, will enter the military service already equipped with their basic motivation and orientation. And those who do not enter the military service will provide the military with a more unified, active, and co-operative support from the homefront.

The Army can no longer afford to pay for society’s failure to provide the soldier with his basic motivation and orientation. But it was a natural development, in the face of society’s failure, that the Army should undertake the basic orientation and motivation of the recruit. However, it has been established beyond question that the recruit—already in the Army and reconciled to the fact that he must train to fight—is primarily interested in how to get on with the job and how to survive while doing it. Army leaders bemoan the fact that too much of the average soldier’s time is spent in the pipeline—which includes training—and that the time is too short during which he is available for gainful employment in the job for which he is trained. Yet we have been carried away by our Troop Information Program to the point where it detracts needlessly from gainful training and employment. **Precombat orientation and motivation of the soldier is dissipated by our effort to teach him too many nonessentials.**

The Stouffer survey—conducted during World War II by the Army’s own Troop Information and Education Division—arrived at the following conclusion based upon thousands of interviews and questionnaires:

... the American soldier [was] typically without deep personal commitment to a war which he nevertheless accepted as unavoidable. ... in general, he gave little concern to the conflicting values underlying the military struggle. Although he showed a strong but tacit patriotism, this

usually did not lead him in his thinking to subordinate his personal interests to the furtherance of ideal aims and values. The core of the attitude among combat men seemed to be that any talk that did not subordinate idealistic values and patriotism to the harsher realities of the combat situation was hypocritical and a person who expressed such ideas was a hypocrite.

S. L. A. Marshall, in an interview, stated that he personally conducted tests among groups of recruits to determine where their primary interests lay. He attempted to stimulate their interest by references to such subjects as the basic issues of the war, what benefits the soldier can obtain from the Army, and the coming USO shows. He concluded that never was there a single spark of interest in these matters.

But as soon as a sergeant walked in and set down a mortar or a machinegun, they immediately came to life, crowded around the weapon, and started asking questions. These men knew why they were in the Army and were interested in nothing but how to learn the job they were going to perform.

Marshall stated that he conducted these tests to prove to senior officers that the emphasis in our orientation of the recruit was wrong and based upon a misconception of the average soldier’s aims and interests. “But,” he said, “these officers appeared unconvinced.”

Has the Army paid any heed to these experts? Let us look at another report. In 1949, a committee appointed by the President examined the Army’s Troop Information and Education Program in the field. The findings of this committee were unanimously laudatory. Here is a bit of supporting testimony from the committee’s report to the President:

One of our staff reports, commenting on an exceptionally fine discussion group held by a young paratroop platoon leader, had this to say:

‘It was obvious that this was an exceptional officer who had built up a close relationship with his men, many of whom were uneducated and not very alert. Nevertheless, it was a treat to see the way they stood up and discussed foreign trade (sic) with him. He showed an exceptional knack at eliciting comments from the men, coaxing them, wheedling them, ordering them, but in the end gaining a general agreement on the value of foreign aid (sic) and stimulating them to a continued interest in related topics.’

It was obvious that here was a young officer who was developing his capacities for leadership through his participation in the Information and Education Program.

Let me say first, that any officer who can order the interest of his men is indeed exceptional. And without intent to take unfair advantage of what may be an editor's oversight, I will wager that many of these men knew not, nor cared, whether they were discussing foreign trade or foreign aid. The "coaxing, wheedling, and ordering" is proof of that. But what is more important, this report included hearty indorsements of the program by many senior commanders but not one opinion of a soldier subjected to the program.

A troop information program which runs the gamut from "Tibet, the Roof of the World" to "Customs and Traditions of the Turkish Navy" is not a program which develops motivation or in any way prepares the soldier for battle. War is a pretty grim business and men preparing for war are aware of that. They know that their principal job will be to kill and destroy. Our training mission is to teach them to do this job efficiently and quickly and to survive while doing it. Proper motivation and high morale will ease their task and the training task. They come to us with potentially strong motivating forces such as self-pride, the desire for approbation, pride in their country, design to win, a willingness to go "all-out" to keep from letting the rest of the team down. These are the same forces that have driven them since childhood and have continued to drive them through high school and college football. These are the motivating forces which our troop information programs and our basic and unit training programs must seek to develop.

The principal bulwark of fighting morale is confidence—confidence of the soldier in himself, in his teammates, in his leaders, in his own weapon and those weapons which support him. Only by intense and concentrated training and association can this confidence be developed to the desired degree that will sustain the soldier in combat. It is in the interest of the quality of the finished soldier, rather than in the interest of economy, that we should seek to eliminate all deviations from this objective.

I subscribe to the contention of S. L. A. Marshall who believes that in the recruit's earliest training, we must give him the facts of life—give him an understanding of the battlefield, more realistic training. Cut out the lectures on national policy and strategy, tactics and logistics of high command. Give him "the simple details of common experience on the battlefield.

Substitute reality for romance." The soldier must be given some idea of the loneliness, the fears, the stresses and morale depressants he will encounter in combat and he must be taught how to counteract and minimize them; in this way they will come as no surprise and he will be better able to control them.

In short, the Army must eliminate from its precombat training and orientation programs the "long hair" discussions, the "flag-waving," and the other nonessentials which detract from our principal objective of ensuring the battle-readiness of the individual and the team.

External Relations

Now, more than ever, we need a wholesome relationship between the Army, the public, the Congress, and the press. Never in history has any organization been subjected to such a volume of day-to-day critical analysis as our Army. Never has any organization had so many living former members who, by virtue of their brief membership, have qualified themselves as experts in the policies and affairs of that organization. Never has one organization influenced the lives of so many in a way which has resulted in sacrifice and deprivation. Furthermore, no single organization has ever before absorbed more of the tax dollar. Lastly, never in history has criticism been so one-sided. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the Army's public relations program has long been a defensive program? Have the critics ever stopped to consider the impact of their blasts on morale in our Armed Forces—even among troops in combat? Have they ever considered that the morale of the leaders they attack can influence by contagion the morale of the troops these leaders command?

A servant—who is permitted no right to retaliate—can be publicly browbeaten for a limited time, beyond which the results can be nothing but dire. Our military leaders are public servants who must accept criticism from Congress and the press but who cannot criticize in return. Here is what one civilian official thinks about this unfortunate condition and its effects. Former Assistant Secretary of the Army, James P. Mitchell writes:

Nothing affects the morale of our soldiers more than a feeling that the Army and the uniform are not held in esteem by the citizenry. Any action by any of us that leads to that conclusion strikes at morale and thus at efficiency. Such an approach should not inhibit healthy criticism

which, in a democracy is natural, expected, and necessary. However, there is a very definite line between healthy, intelligent criticism, and castigation of those who, for want of a better term, are called 'the brass.'

As a result of the present unwholesome relationship between the Army, the Congress, and the press, Army prestige, discipline, and combat morale have suffered.

The very nature of Army organization, its mission and activities, the source of its support, dictate Army policy as one of receptiveness to criticism. Our lawmakers—as the spokesmen of the public—possess the greatest authority to criticize. Within the Army, we try to adhere to a policy of criticizing subordinates in private. Obviously, criticizing a leader in the presence of others—including his subordinates—not only shows disrespect for the individual, but also affects adversely his morale and that of his subordinates. Public criticism of our military leaders and their activities by Congress and the press cannot help but create food for thought and conversation throughout the ranks of our Armed Forces. It cannot help but weaken morale as well as the very structure of military discipline which is based upon mutual respect and confidence between soldier and commander.

Oftentimes such criticism is founded upon misinformation, insufficient information, or no information. It need not be directed at a particular leader to have an ill effect. For example, a public reference to “the plush living enjoyed by Officers in the Tokyo area” does not help the morale of the tired and dirty rifleman in his Korean foxhole. Yet, such utterances are made without thought of their full effect and often without respect for the facts. I am certain that many such statements would never be made if the spokesman gave due consideration to the over-all effect.

I know of no other bodies wherein we can find men who are more conscientious or more dedicated to the welfare of our Nation than in our Congress, among the press, and in the officer corps of our military services. Surely here is the basis for a mutual and healthy respect which is all that is needed to iron out differences of opinion in an atmosphere of friendly and inconspicuous co-operation. I do not mean to propose that Congressmen or the press be gagged or that these three agencies conduct all of their liaison under a cloak of secrecy.

I only suggest that certain matters—which can have a far-reaching and harmful effect upon morale and discipline or upon the prestige of a military service—be discussed on a “leader-to-leader” basis toward a constructive solution. Furthermore, this relationship, to be practical, must be bound by a written code of ethics.

You may ask, “Who must make the first move toward establishing this relationship?” The answer is, *he who possesses the most moral courage.* Obviously, the Army has the greatest need for such a relationship and-if no one else makes the first move—we in the Army must muster the moral courage to make it. Such a relationship may occasionally require a Congressman to subordinate political aspirations for the good of national security. It may frequently require a columnist or correspondent to “tone down” an exciting story by presenting both sides of the issue. It may even, on occasion, require a military leader to jeopardize his future by standing his ground in the face of opposition from the Congress or the press. But when I look at the caliber and integrity of our top military leaders, our leaders in Congress and in the world of journalism, it is inconceivable to me that such a relationship cannot be established. This relationship with the spokesmen of the public and the informers of the public is essential if we are to expect unified public support of our military ventures, an acceptance by the public of its obligations, and a healthy respect for the military services.

It is time for the Army’s public relations program to shift from the defensive to an aggressive selling campaign.

Public apathy and resentment toward the military and its activities is largely due to the lack of a sound, imaginative, and aggressive public relations program in the Army. The recent report of Admiral Womble’s committee stated in part:

There is ample evidence of a lack of understanding on the part of the people concerning the necessity for implementing our present national military policy. It appears that a portion of this unfavorable attitude stems from the recent conduct of hostilities in Korea. Certainly these hostilities were conducted without the degree of public support afforded to two preceding worldwide conflicts.

The morale of the fighting soldier demands that his trials and sacrifices be recognized and appreciated. The esprit of the Army demands unified public support. Public apathy or resentment cannot only lower morale

in the combat zone, but it can also influence military planning and thereby determine the course of a war.

I have already criticized Congress and the press for their share in the responsibility for this condition. The Army also deserves its share of the criticism.

Our Army public relations program must leave its defensive positions and enter upon a sound and aggressive educational campaign designed to present timely and complete “facts of life” to the public and to enlist its unified support of military programs and of individual units.

We must not depend so heavily on the press and public officialdom to “sell our product” and to unite the public behind our policies and programs. The Army draws capable men from every walk of life. Certainly this provides the capability of establishing and maintaining a promotion and merchandizing program equal to or better than that of any business or industry in the Nation. We cannot admit that our product is harder to sell when to date we have done little more than attempt to defend that product. It is time we directed our sales effort at the public which elects the Congress instead of devoting our major selling effort to the Congress.

Let us go to work on the public. If they are apathetic, it is our fault. A soldier in a combat unit in Korea wrote to his hometown explaining that his platoon was trying to help an orphanage. The entire town pitched in enthusiastically to help in this project, and it was not a one-time proposition. A lasting and friendly liaison

was established between a small American town and a small fighting unit in Korea. There are hundreds of similar instances from the Korean conflict alone. Can we justly accuse such a public of apathy? If one soldier can stir up such unified local public support, what could the Army do if it tried? Why not approach our cities and towns and invite them to “adopt” overseas units as some have already done?

The American soldier, by nature, is a champion of the underprivileged. Even in the combat zone he will give his pay and his spare time to a worthy cause. The public which produced this soldier has the same heart and soul. Fraternal, religious, and business organizations would cheerfully handle the administrative burdens of such a project. Here, I believe, is one suggestion which would start the ball rolling toward unified public support, higher combat morale, and a warmer international relationship and one which might also take some of the burden of foreign aid and rehabilitation off the Army and other Government agencies.

Needless to say, I have spoken for myself. Many of the ideas expressed herein are by no means original. Many of the issues which I have treated are somewhat sensitive and controversial. But let me say that my morale has been partially sustained by the fact that never—during my career in the Army—have I been restrained from expressing my opinion on any controversial issue within the limits imposed by good taste and security classification. ■

It is of the utmost importance that everything possible be done to create an atmosphere conducive to the maintenance of a career military service, clothed in dignity and honor, which will be attractive to the highest type of young American. Nothing is more detrimental to the service than a feeling among its personnel that they are held in low esteem by their fellow citizens. Any action which fosters such a conclusion strikes at the tap roots of our security.

—Secretary of the Army Robert T. Stevens