

Foreword



General Raymond T. Odierno, U.S. Army

The Profession of Arms

OVER THE LAST 10 years our Army has proven itself in some of the most difficult environments it has ever faced. Our leaders at every level have displayed unparalleled ingenuity, flexibility, and commitment. Our Soldiers have displayed mental and physical toughness and courage under fire. Our Department of the Army civilians have enabled our Soldiers in unprecedented fashion. Together, they have transformed the Army into the most versatile, agile, rapidly deployable, and sustainable strategic land force in the world. They have, in short, proven our Army again to be the Nation's force of decisive action.

In this time of transition, committed as we are to seeing our current conflicts through to successful conclusion for our Nation, conscious of the diversity of threats the future security environment will likely hold, and well aware of the fiscal challenges our Nation now confronts, it is entirely appropriate that we pause to take stock of our Profession of Arms. It is our professional character that has been the foundation of our strength and the basis of our success. As we look to an uncertain future, the Profession of Arms campaign is welcomed in its promise to deepen our understanding of ourselves and our sacred obligation to our Nation, our Army, and our American Soldiers.

The current volume provides an excellent account of the attributes, characteristics, and qualities that have sustained our profession, allowed it to endure during periods of hardship, and hold the promise for its future strength. As you read this special edition, you will note many important points, but I want to direct your attention to what I believe is their common thread and what is rightly the *sine qua non* of our Profession of Arms: Trust.

Trust is earned, not given, and is gained and maintained through deeds, not words. It is an implicit bond between individuals, organizations, the institution, and the Nation. It extends laterally and vertically, and it is two-way. Trust is also paramount to leadership regardless of one's leadership style, the operational environment, or the mission. Trust allows us to have a strong, respected profession. In other words, without trust we do not have a profession.

General Raymond T. Odierno became the 38th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army in September 2011.

PHOTO: PHOTO: 1LT Brittany Clark, platoon leader with 535th Engineer Support Company, gives a route clearance briefing to her platoon, Zabul Province, Afghanistan, 12 May 2011.

Inherent trust enables empowerment, forges exacting individual and collective standards, and guides our leader development. It is the basis of our character as Soldiers and drives behavior in congruence with our Army values. As remarked by former Chief of Staff, General Creighton Abrams, “While we are guarding the country, we must accept being the guardian of the finest ethics; the country needs it and we must do it.” Our mutual trust comes in several forms—trust between Soldiers and their fellow Soldiers, trust between Soldiers and their leaders, trust between the Army and Soldiers, and trust between our Army and the American people.

Trust: Between Soldiers

Forged in mutual privation and shared experience, the foundational trust between Soldiers has been an essential component of armies as far back as history can reach. Soldiers unconditionally trust each other with their lives. As they go into battle, they know that their flanks are covered at all times by their brothers and sisters. It is a universal trust extended to all that wear the military uniform, and allows Soldiers to focus on the mission. Trust between Soldiers is the very essence of our Warrior Ethos, an enduring bond of the American Army. Far from diminishing this bond, today’s decentralized operating environment makes it ever more important. It is right that our Profession of Arms Campaign pays careful attention to this very human aspect of our profession.

As General Franks so aptly points out in this volume, the professional military ethic is founded on a shared understanding of the norms and values of our profession. But of what does this shared understanding and common bond between Soldiers consist? First, we expect our Soldiers at all ranks to master the unique professional expertise required to perform their duties. Our units depend on it for mission success, and, in the most trying of times, our fellow Soldiers look to each other’s competence in these skills for their mutual survival. Next, our application of land combat power must never be divorced from the purpose for which it was intended. We know from Clausewitz that violence unconnected to political ends is pointless, and we know from our basic humanity that it is immoral. As Soldiers, we apply our expert knowledge in service to the Nation, protection of the American people, and in defense of the values enshrined in our Constitution. Finally, we

expect our fellow Soldiers to apply their expert skill in protection of the Nation according to our shared Army Values and ethical principles. Such shared values and principles must discipline our behavior and govern the way in which Soldiers accomplish their missions. This means chiefly that we expect our fellow Soldiers to have the strength of character to make the right decisions and stand by them under the most difficult of circumstances.

Trust: Soldiers and Leaders

At all levels, leaders today must understand that their effectiveness relies on their ability to earn their status. Formal authority may come from their position and rank, but effective leadership requires much more. Effective leadership is foundational to the essential relationship between Soldiers and their leaders, and it is a sustaining feature of our Profession of Arms.

Current conflicts have taught us a few things about the kind of leader attributes and role-model qualities this requires. First, leaders are lifelong learners, who remain committed to understanding themselves and their environment. Leaders are adaptable, flexible, innovative, and inclusive. These attributes enable our leaders to forge trust and create unity of effort among diverse stakeholders inside and outside the military chain of command. Finally, good leaders are morally and ethically strong and physically and mentally tough.

These attributes will be required more than ever in the complex operational and strategic environments of the future, and our Soldiers will expect their leaders to be capable of successfully negotiating these environments. We need leaders who are not risk averse and can make sound timely decisions under stress, all while remaining morally and ethically strong. We must build this into our leader development systems, nurturing, broadening, and challenging our leaders at all levels, from our senior generals and command sergeants major to our company commanders and squad leaders.

Trust: Our Army and Our Soldiers

Throughout my 35 years of service, the Army has encountered numerous challenges. When I entered the Army, we were just completing the transition to an All-Volunteer Force. I saw an Army that, in a matter of a few years, transformed

its leader development systems; invested in Soldiers and their professional military education; instituted revolutionary unit and individual training regimens; and charted a vision for integrated, Joint, and combined operations that became the benchmark for decisive military operations.

In making these reforms, the contemporary Army embarked on a new contract of trust between its Soldiers and the Army as a professional institution. We invested in their development and built our volunteer Army on the leaders they became and the systems that allowed them to excel, repaying their service and sacrifice with improved attention to programs that took better care of our Soldiers and their families. Recent years have only deepened our appreciation for the importance of this mutual faith between Soldiers and our Army.

Our current situation, however, is unique. We have seen our All Volunteer Army stressed in unprecedented ways over the past decade. Amidst the longest sustained period of combat in our history, we find ourselves confronting budgetary constraints in the context of our Nation's larger fiscal challenges. And, while we anticipate the opportunity to reset our Army, the future era of uncertainty will surely test our plans.

In the years ahead, we must once again demonstrate the adaptive spirit that has made our Army the most capable, sustainable, and decisive land force in the world. It is the innovativeness and flexibility of our volunteer Army and the initiative of its Soldiers and leaders that will make this possible. In our leader development, training systems, doctrine, and in the support we provide to Soldiers and their families, we cannot break the mutual trust between the institution and our Soldiers upon which future success will necessarily be built.

Trust: Our Army and the American People

We know that the essential feature of a profession is the bond of trust that unites professionals and the client for whom they perform their expert work. In this regard, the Army is not unlike other professions. The Army, however, is exceptional in that we are entrusted with a grave and unique responsibility to ethically employ land combat power on behalf of the American people. As this Profession of Arms Campaign has so clearly taught us, it is the American

people and not the Army who will ultimately decide the degree to which our professional claims ring true.

Today, the Army enjoys an unprecedented level of trust, confidence, and standing with the American people. By its actions in this past decade, our Army has again proven to the Nation the professional character of our force. The expert work of professionals being neither routine nor repetitive, our Soldiers and their leaders have demonstrated the ability to respond to new demands and solve original problems while facing changed and changing operational and strategic challenges.

If there is one thing that history has taught us, it is that the demands of today will not be easily forecasted into the requirements of tomorrow. In fact, it has often been said that our record of predicting the future has been poor, if not often unreliable. Our Nation will undoubtedly level new demands on our Army in the future, and our continued professional worth in the eyes of the American people will be judged on our ability to remain relevant, responding to unforeseen challenges with the same adaptable, inventive, and, indeed, professional character that has proven so essential to past success. In this way, our professional strength is not simply dependent on how we have responded and will continue to respond to current conflicts, but also in how we prepare to meet the demands of an uncertain future.

Conclusion

The trust that our Army has established throughout our history and especially these past decades is the basis of our profession. It requires, in this era of budgetary uncertainty, that we keep faith with each other, our volunteer Soldiers, and our Nation as we pass this important cornerstone of our Republic to a new generation of Americans.

I want us to continue the dialogue on the profession, begun in late 2010 and extended by this volume. Our goal is to gain a fresh, relevant, Army-wide understanding of the Profession of Arms. This discussion must take place throughout the Army: from the Forward Operating Bases in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the squad bays at home station, to the classrooms in our education and training centers—among junior enlisted Soldiers, their unit leadership, to Soldiers like me.

Read these articles, discuss and debate them, and let me know what you think. I'm listening.