



Soldiers with Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team provide security during a joint exercise at Fort Campbell, Ky., Aug. 16, 2019. The Soldiers spent two weeks training with Green Berets from the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) on battle drills, handling prisoners of war, tactical casualty care and evacuation, and mission planning. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Iman Broady-Chin)

# Leader Engagement

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**T**here is nothing as important or rewarding as the privilege to lead Soldiers. Leadership is a continuous process of influence and is the lifeblood of our Army. ADP 6-22 defines an Army leader as anyone who by virtue of assumed role or assigned responsibility inspires and influences people both inside and outside the chain of command to pursue actions, focus thinking, and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization.

Throughout our history wars have been won and lost as a result of the actions taken by leaders to ensure their Soldiers were properly trained, equipped, and led during combat operations. Since the formation of the Continental Army until today Army leaders have accepted the challenges to lead Soldiers in some of the most demand-

ing environments under the most dangerous conditions imaginable. They have done this with great success.

To be an effective leader you must be engaged in all aspects of the unit's mission, training plan and the training, development, and lives (both professional and personal) of your Soldiers. It is extremely challenging to accomplish all of the leader tasks necessary to be an effective noncommissioned officer (NCO), but you can with great success if you are engaged. There is a distinct difference between being in charge and being an engaged leader. Leaders are professional Soldiers that know and exude Army values. They are role models for all to emulate and are adept at motivating, teaching, coaching, counseling, and mentoring. Set the example at all times.



Soldiers have their harness inspected to ensure they can safely rappel down the tower for the Air Assault Course at Camp Aachen, Germany, Sept. 17, 2019. The Air Assault Course is designed to prepare Soldiers for missions that call for the use of multipurpose transportation and assault helicopters. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Zachary Stahlberg, 7th Army Training Command)

It's how you perform when no one is watching that really counts. Never do anything that will discredit you, your leaders, or your great unit. Have pride in your unit. Salute with pride!

Be the standard bearer. Set the example in appearance, personal conduct, physical fitness, competence, customs, and courtesies. Do not accept mediocrity as your standard. Always try to be the absolute best at everything you do no matter how insignificant the task. Everything is a part of a bigger plan. Everything you do is important. Set goals and achieve them, don't just accept things because that is how they have always been. This is contagious and your Soldiers will emulate you which in turn will improve the formation.

Be visible and present. Engaged leaders are visible and present at all training events, inspections, promotion and reenlistment ceremonies, unit events, etc. Be on the ground leading your Soldiers from the front both in peacetime and war. Never ask your Soldiers to do anything that you would not be willing to do yourself. Demonstrate to them that you are their leader and you will do what you ask them to do. Your presence sends a strong message that you are an engaged leader. Endure the hardships with your Soldiers and they will respect you.

Leaders take care of their Soldiers. Leadership is not convenient. It is your primary inherent responsibility. Communicate consistently with your Soldiers and never leave them unformed. Know everything there is to know about your Soldiers and their families. You can never know enough. Understand their strengths and weaknesses, goals, desires, and needs. Listening is key

to communicating with your Soldiers. Communicate with your Soldiers every day and don't wait to make time for a formal counseling session. Their professional development is a continuous process. Accept that your life belongs to your Soldiers. You must make yourself available, particularly when the Soldier needs you, not just when it is convenient for yourself. If they know you are listening and genuinely care about them and their families they will trust in you.

Conduct routine inspections routinely. Inspect something every day. Make a habit of conducting daily walk thru of the barracks and conducting in-ranks inspections. Develop a system so that you are inspecting your section and Soldiers equipment systematically and routinely. Annotate shortcomings, conduct corrective training, and provide feedback and follow-up to ensure deficiencies are corrected. Your Soldiers expect you to hold them accountable to the standard. Do routine maintenance routinely. You should inspect and maintain your equipment (vehicles, weapons, KIT, radios, etc.) weekly. Enforce high equipment readiness and maintenance standards with all your subordinates. Individual Soldier Combat Equipment (KIT) should be configured to your unit standard operating procedure. Eye protection should be worn at all times on ranges, in a tactical environment and with the helmet. Ensure that your equipment meets the TM – 10/20 maintenance standards and that you have 100% accountability. You have to go to war with what you have. If you don't maintain your equipment it will fail you in war. Soldiers must always be ready. Inspections are not designed to see how you can get ready. Inspections are designed to check your readiness.

Time is the one resource we can never get enough of, therefore it is extremely important that your time and the time of your Soldiers is managed both efficiently and effectively. Ensure that you and your Soldiers are always where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there in the proper uniform ready to train and execute. When you allow Soldiers to be late you have set a new standard. There is only one standard for everything we do.

Plan your training effectively while managing your time wisely so training is worthwhile. Solid, realistic,

performance-oriented, tactical training is the only standard. Ensure you manage mandatory training. An untrained Soldier is a leadership shortcoming. You must have trained combat lifesavers and all Soldiers must be licensed to operate all assigned equipment. Every Soldier must be able to shoot (marksmanship), move (mounted and dismounted), communicate (ABCS and Comms), fight (combative), survive (first-aid/combat lifesaver), sustain (stewardship) and secure (force protection). Soldiers expect realistic, tough, demanding training. An untrained Soldier is a leader failure.

Be physically fit and motivated while you are conducting physical fitness training. You must set the example and enforce the standard in this area. Participate in PT with your Soldiers every day. PT is a bonafide occupational qualification. We must be fit to be Soldiers and leaders must be extremely fit to lead Soldiers. Don't accept APFT failures and overweight Soldiers. Ensure that your fitness programs are demanding. Fitness also includes wellness. Focus on comprehensive fitness, medical readiness, and worldwide deployability. Unfit Soldiers are leader failures.

Safety and security is of the utmost importance. A violation is serious and detrimental to readiness and the mission. Do not sacrifice safety for speed. Be conscious of your surroundings and constantly reinforce operational security. Risk assessments are mandatory for every mission. Conduct a thorough risk assessment and execute it. Completing a TRIPS (travel risk planning system) report is mandatory before all travel. Also ensuring that your Soldiers routinely complete the GAT (global assessment tool) will help you with identifying high risk or troubled Soldiers long before an issue might develop. Integrate the Soldier risk assessment tool into all periodic counseling sessions and prior to and after major training events and operations. Safety and security save lives.

Lead with self-discipline and impose it. Subordinates are not your buddies. Soldiers expect leaders to be highly disciplined. Review all standard operating procedures, regulations and policies upon arrival to your unit. Enforce regulations and policies at all times. Never walk by anything that is absolutely not in accordance with a prescribed standard. If you do, you just set a new standard.

The decision-making process demands complete responsive reporting. You must keep each other informed and always ask the question, "who else needs to know?" Finally, "bad news does not get better with time," never hold on to information for fear of the response from those being briefed. Your door should always be wide open. Use the NCO support channel and chain of command.

Exercise firm but fair leadership. Leaders award the good and take appropriate action for the wrong. Leaders don't be too lazy to write awards. Just as importantly have the intestinal fortitude to provide critical feedback to your Soldiers when they need it. Soldiers have

the right to expect this type of leadership. Accepting mediocrity is detrimental to combat readiness. You must continuously teach, coach, counsel, and mentor those Soldiers that fail to meet and maintain Army standards and hold them accountable if they do not improve.

Counsel regularly, every Soldier has the right to be properly counseled on time. Develop plans to support and foster your Soldier's professional growth and development. Maximize corrective training. An untrained Soldier is a leadership shortcoming. Uniform Code of Military Justice should always be the last resort, not the first option. Soldiers must understand the corrective training and not view it as harassment; it is an alternative to punitive action to correct a performance shortcoming.

Take action, use initiative, and don't always wait to be told to do something. Initiative is one of the biggest signs of great character; it really stands out. The biggest mistake that you can make is not doing anything! Ask questions. We expect you to. You are just starting out and there is a lot to learn. Read and understand the task, conditions, and standards. Be an expert at doctrine. Don't just take someone's word on this is how it is done. Do your research and homework before you train and conduct operations. Fully understand the commander's



A Soldier from 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division climbs the "Jacob's Ladder" obstacle at the Camp Buehring, Kuwait obstacle course, June 21, 2019 as part of a Spur Ride. The obstacle course builds teamwork and confidence among Soldiers hoping to join the Order of the Spur. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Liane Hatch)



A relief commander conducts an inspection of a sentinel's rifle during the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., Sept. 7, 2017. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Carlos J. Lazo)

intent and the operational environment. Resource your Soldiers to accomplish the mission and you run interference to reduce training distracters.

Ensure that both you and your subordinates are enrolled in professional development programs (civilian/military schooling) to enhance professional growth and promotion potential. Sacrifice now and it will pay huge dividends in the future. Ensure your Soldiers are physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially ready (including their families) to attend and successfully complete their level of NCOES. Bring to the chain of command's attention career issues such as retention, promotions, reassignment, retirement, reclassification,

senior NCOs and officers. They have experience and a responsibility for your development. You must be balanced. Organize yourself so that you spend the majority of your time doing those things that are most relevant to the training, readiness, and health and welfare of your Soldiers.

Lastly, you are an ethical standard bearer for your Soldiers. Live the Army values and embody our warrior ethos. Remember, you are always on display no matter where you are at. Your Soldiers are watching you and they will do what you do. You are exactly who they perceive you to be and you cannot fool them with your words. Your actions speak for you. ■

professional development, schools, etc., so that they can help you with them. You must be the biggest recruiter and career counselor in the unit.

Soldiers do exactly in war as they do in training. No seatbelts in training equals death in combat (as well as in peacetime operations). No helmets in tactical vehicles equal head injuries and death. No muzzle awareness and weapon safety checks equal negligent discharge fatalities, and injuries. No eye and hearing protection equal blind and deaf Soldiers.

Continuously seek the advice of your se-

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