Honor and Character

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Abstract

In this paper, I argue for the enduring relevance and coherence of the idea of honor by referring to its dialectical historical development and signs of survival in contemporary culture. I then discuss how codes of honor at military academies can be utilized as a part of leader development, and not merely as sets of rules to prevent cadets and midshipmen from lying, cheating, and stealing. A consideration of honor encourages pride in the profession of arms, since it is a form of ethical practice whose roots are martial. Honor, I contend, should be taught across the academy in all of its historical and ethical richness, as a means of developing the habits of trust, trustworthiness, and accountability that are vital in officers and leaders.

Honor and Character

Honor is a venerable species of moral practice that has flourished in different cultures and has evolved over the centuries. In the west, honor has arguably seen four distinct periods, classical, medieval, early modern, and modern, in which the concept and practice of honor were distinguishable, if not entirely distinct. Honor is an inheritance from the past, in particular from such aristocratic, heroic, and chivalric societies as ancient Greece and medieval and Renaissance Europe. Currently, the idea of honor is invoked by the core values of the United States Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. Honor codes are in place at all of the U.S. service academies, nearly all military colleges and high schools, and at many non-military academic institutions. While these codes have the specialized function of preventing cheating and other forms of academic misconduct, they are also viewed at many institutions as playing a part in the broader ethical development of students. There has even been an honor revival of sorts among academics and journalists (Bowman, 2006; Ignatieff, 1997; Robinson, 2006). Honor lives, it seems, at least in name, or does it?

In this paper, I would like to consider whether these signs of honor represent a mere residue of an anachronistic, venerable and elusive idea, or whether honor is and ought to be still a force in our lives. In particular, I want to consider the role of honor in leader development. While honor is more of practice than of theory, and has therefore

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invited the study more often of historians and anthropologists than of ethicists, it is subject to analysis in having certain coherent, enduring and even essential aspects and, as I will maintain, its own distinctive dynamic. I plan to argue that honor still has value as a corollary to contemporary or academic approaches to military ethics which do not have the same embeddedness and legitimacy in the history of the military occupation. Modern military organizations ought to preserve the idea of honor because its roots are martial, because it provides for personal responsibility for one's actions, and because it preserves a sense of the relevance and worthiness of the traditions of military service. In this short discussion, I will briefly trace the historical development of the idea of honor in its military incarnation. I will then try to define honor by identifying some of its salient and enduring characteristics. Finally, I would like to make some suggestions about how we may refine and enhance the practice of honor in the military academies as part of other efforts to develop traits of leadership and character.

Honor has survived the centuries in part because it has been the product of a strong historical dialectic of public and private senses of worth and value. I call this a "strong" dialectic, because honor as an idea or a practice does not weaken the claims of either public or private lives to accommodate the other, but builds on both, in effect ensuring that public esteem and private self-worth are mutually supporting, rather than hostile to one another. This is why honor has been such a powerful idea, developing both the pride of the individual and his or her sense of belonging, and it is also why honor has been challenged most (not necessarily to its detriment), at times in history that have valued alienation or estrangement, whether radical, cynical, political, romantic, or merely self-indulgent.

Ancient Paternity

Honor is an ancient ideal of conduct with significant philosophical roots in Aristotle and cultural or historic roots that are much older. In the very early, heroic, manifestations of the idea of honor, as in the *Iliad*, honor was mostly if not solely a matter of public honors: wine, tripods, slaves. Aristotle's account of honor (*time)* in the *Ethics* and the *Rhetoric* generally equates honor with eminence and esteem. There was little idea among the ancient Greeks of the inner "sense of honor" that becomes important in later times, but even the Greeks recognized the distinction between honors which are truly deserved and those which are not, indeed, this disparity fueled much of the classical discourse on the relationship of society and the individual, from Achilles to Socrates. Roman honor, *Honoria,* was notably corporate, in keeping with the late-republican and imperial practice of standing armies and permanent, numbered legions in which a soldier could expect to serve many years, and which were the objects of strong *esprit de corps*.

Medieval honor was a synthesis of Christianity and (what may almost be called its military incarnation) chivalry. Under the influence of the Christian concepts of the soul and of the Catholic practice of the confessional, the moral life, and honor with it, moved inward, but this movement was held in check by the demands of chivalry, by the need for the man of honor to pursue his public role even in the face of religious or romantic distractions. Failures of honor became matters of both private "guilt" as well as of public "shame." The periods of Renaissance and Reformation were characterized by an uncentering of traditional sources of power: religious and secular. The Protestant emphasis on an unintermediated connection with the deity served to support the idea that honor must lie within the

individual. The unquiet state of a Europe once united by Christendom and anchored in feudal allegiances but later rent by wars of religion was in a sense reflected at the level of the individual by the height of the cult of dueling, a radical expression of honor as an individual matter.

In the centuries following the middle ages and Renaissance, honor became more egalitarian, less determinedly individualistic, more accountable, bourgeois, and even eventually almost democratic, at least in the new world. The practice of honor came to be defined not only by class-membership, but by the choice of profession. The early modern period saw the development of large national armies and of professional officer corps (in self-conscious revival of Roman practice), groups shaped by regulations, training and doctrine. Armies also increasingly develop distinct codes of honor. Although the European officer corps was drawn from the aristocracy, the growing dominance of non-aristocratic infantry on the battlefield tended to democratize the idea of honor, as did the need for the emerging professional class of officers to acquire technical skills. The historian N.A.M. Rodgers observes that, in the eighteenth century British Navy, the old-fashioned, personal, and aristocratic code of honor was "infiltrated" by a more bourgeois version of honor that embraced duty, service, and professionalism (2002). This was symptomatic of a broad tendency among officers which began roughly in the seventeenth century when, under the influence of men like Lipsius and Maurice of Nassau, military officers were encouraged to think of themselves as responsible public servants, an attitude which eventually helped to end the practice of dueling (Rothenberg, 1986). Cardinal Newman was to write that dueling was brought into disfavor by gentlemanly taste, but Stephen Brodsky points out that the growing allegiance of the officer to the secular deity of the state, and its avatars the regiment and commissioned ship of war, helped to convince men that it was bad form to risk killing comrades in arms over points of honor (Brodsky, 1998; Newman, 1962). In *Washington's Crossing*, David Hackett Fischer points out that the private soldiers of all of the nationalities represented in the Delaware campaign of the American Revolution: American, British, and Hessian, subscribed to various ideas of honor (2004). These different ideas reflected the changes that had been taking place taking place in the idea of soldierly honor throughout the early modern period, with the Hessians, who came from a near feudal society, subscribing to an old-fashioned view of honor defined by wealth and prestige, the British embracing the regiment as the locus of an honor of service, while the Americans developed a sense of honor as socially responsible and inclusive.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the idea of honor survived and prospered by incorporating an ethos of service, although perhaps due also to the durability of aristocratic values and cachet. A service elite came to supplant one based entirely on birth and manners. Philosophical ethics tended away from the idea of honor toward an emphasis on Kantian rights and rules, or Benthamite/Millian outcomes. In the twentieth century, the ethos of service was called into question by the terrible price it seemed to exact in the trenches of World War I, and by its misuse at the hands of modern devotees of collectivist thought on the left and on the right. In World War II, the idea of honor as a unifying and moderating force among military professionals was frayed further by holocaust and total war. Since then, modernists and post-modernists have tended to deconstruct any culturally rooted sense of value. In the midst of the debunking of honor that seemed

to be taking place in the twentieth century however, a prominent figure in cultural debate pointed out some reasons to justify the survival of the idea. Albert Camus wrote a reminder of the enduring and surviving attachment to honor diverse and even otherwise divided individuals may share.

> "In the conflicts of this century, I have felt close to all obstinate men, particularly to those who have never been able to abandon their faith in honor. I have shared and continue to share many contemporary hysterias. But I have never been able to make up my mind to spit, as so many have done, on the word 'honor' – no doubt because I was and continue to be aware of the injustices I have committed, and because I know and continue to know instinctively that honor, like pity, is the irrational virtue that carries on after justice and reason have become powerless."
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> (Watson, 1960, p 12)

In recent decades, the resurgence of interest in ethics, and in ideas of ethics, like those of Aristotle, which offer alternatives to the rule and rights based ethics, has also seen a renewal of interest in honor. Modern discussions of honor have included works by anthropologist Frank Stewart and philosopher Steven Gerrard (Gerrard, 1994; Stewart, 1994). Stewart views honor as a right claimed by certain individuals within a society. His account traces the decline of honor as it becomes more a matter of the individual conscience. Stewart's distinction between "inner" and "outer" honor while useful, perhaps neglects the possibility that honor is the point at which inner and outer intersect, as I have argued. Gerrard examines the similarity of honor to moral codes. Gerrard's discussion takes him far from honor by the end of his article, but he perhaps leads the reader to a conclusion that honor is defensible and desirable in a contingent, fallen world in which perfect justice may be impossible. In fact, his argument may be similar to that advanced by Camus.

Two recent writers on honor have focused on its specifically military utility. In *The Warrior's Honor,* Michael Ignatieff takes a *jus in bello* approach based on his experience of ethnic war in Bosnia and elsewhere (1997). In *Honor: A History,* James Bowman applies the idea of honor to nations as well as to individuals, using honor to state a *jus ad bellum* argument for the war on terror (2006). I will be returning to both of these writers before I conclude.

Certain key features emerge from this genealogy of honor. From its aristocratic and martial origins, honor has developed into the means by which close-knit, hierarchical and highly directed societies have developed a moral sense. It is an ethically-informed "groupthink": the moral life lived outdoors, or the moral life as a contact sport. It is neither purely private nor merely public, but is the intersection of one's own feelings of self-worth and the estimation of one's peers. In fact, I would argue that the essential, enduring feature of honor is perhaps this tug of war between group allegiance and the demands of one's own conscience. The very challenges to honor have in some ways strengthened the idea, by provoking a dialectic between the claims of the individual as well as the group. Honor is a strategy of making peoples' private and public lives mutually accountable and comprehensible. It is possible to be a good person without honor, and one may even speak of prophets without honor, or of someone who is without honor in his or her own time. Honor requires a supportive community of peers, professional associates, or members of an organization. But since it is private as well as public, honor requires responsible, conscientious

individuals. Since those who embrace honor usually have viewed it as sovereign, "trumping" (as Gerrard says), other claims, honor may even be a "loaded gun." French army officers' off-target obsession with honor arguably contributed to the Dreyfus affair, to French resistance to the allies in North Africa during World War II, and to the Algerian coup and the terrorist activities of the OAS in the early 1960s (Best, 1981). Honor can be a dangerous idea, since it grants a fair amount of autonomy to the individual or sub-culture.

For the community of honor, the consensus of values is based not only on a canvassing of the views held by its current members. A community of honor takes the past into account. For military services and schools, the past lives through drills and ceremonies, though traditions and unit symbols. The teaching of military history to recruits and cadets is largely an attempt to communicate values. Since honor is a cultural practice, the values of the group that are inherited from the past must be subject to critique. Some practices may become outdated or become warped over time. Just as the idea of honor may be perverted by a person or persons, the entire group might have a warped conception of honor. The mafia is an egregious example of an organization that has a code of honor that is clearly self-serving and entirely insular. In the military, pernicious attitudes like "zero defect" or "CYA" may creep into the set of standards by which people are judged.

Aspects of Honor

I would like now to articulate the relevance of honor in its military sense. I believe that the practice of honor, and of military honor in particular, can be broken down into four parts. These are honesty, reciprocity, forbearance and restraint, and autonomy and free choice.

Honesty

The connection between public and private values can only be maintained if individuals can trust one another (Holland, 2003). This is why honor systems like those at service academies and other military schools put such a premium on honesty. Honor isn't just about telling the truth, but without truth-telling, the idea of honor is impossible. If someone is "out there" telling lies, cheating or stealing, he or she isn't a person of honor, isn't one of the family, but is a person alone. If too many people insist on doing this, out of pride, or because they are "alienated," disaffected, or cynical, the connection between public and private is lost, and the community of honor, the "economy of sacrifice," collapses into individuals each pursuing selfish ends through unscrupulous means. Such a trajectory is even characteristic of certain societies that begin with elevated and admirable codes of honor. In their own times, the Knights Templar and the Spartan state were two military societies in which, in reaction against an ethos of discipline and temperance, self-interest replaced service, and wealth replaced reputation as the basis of esteem. It might be argued that the corporate culture has followed a similar road. These cautionary tales underscore the importance of honesty, a simple and even a humble virtue, but an essential one.

Reciprocity

The person who desires honor relies on the good opinion of peers, so as much as possible will observe the golden rule, will live up to obligations, repay debts, and return favors in full. Soldiers desiring honor must pull their own weight in the community of honor. This is the aspect of honor which I call reciprocity. The military unit is a social organism seemingly simple, and reducible to a diagram or

table of organization, but which is in reality quite complex. Superimposed on the formal structure of a military unit is the unofficial one of status and obligation, favors and repayment, past record and expectation that determines how the individual and unit function. Members of the organization have a kind of social contract to treat one another with respect and also with regard to their due.

Forbearance and Restraint

Because of the immense power of soldiers and military organizations to do harm, those who carry arms and wish to merit the title of soldier must subscribe to a code of forbearance and restraint, which involves the commitment to use a weapon only in the service of the avowed cause, and to limit the destructiveness of that use as much as possible, not harming and even shielding those who are unarmed. The prohibitions against murder, assault, and theft in military law and the corresponding prohibitions against war crimes in international conventions provide a legal basis for this aspect of honor, but laws on the books may not be enough. The unofficial organization of military organization that I alluded to above should, as one of the requirements of honor, act to provide a climate of values that condemns the irresponsible or self-serving use of force. This aspect of honor is emphasized by Michael Ignatieff in his book *The Warrior's Honor,* particularly with respect to irregular forces that lack that legal apparatus, traditions, stable loyalties, and established identity of regular forces (1997).

Autonomy and Free Choice

The last traits of honor that I identify are autonomy and free choice. As I have suggested earlier, these characteristics can present a problem, but they are necessary to the idea of honor in that they engage each individual in the maintenance of private and public honor. In earlier times, dueling was an extreme example of the aristocrat's fine contempt for mere rules in the pursuit of his own honor. In modern times, it may be said that the professional has inherited some of the autonomy of the aristocrat (and maybe at times some of his prickly self-importance). A profession is identified both by the independence and self-governing capability of the profession, and by the scope for autonomous judgment on the part of its members. The community of honor, once, like the title of gentleman, limited to those with certain antecedents, means, manners and education, has been democratized to include a wider circle. Membership is not conferred, it must be earned, and in stages. The degree of autonomy granted to an individual rests on experience, on confidence in achievement, on reputation, on the practical wisdom born of long service. Among the core values of the naval services, honor, courage and commitment, honor is the pinnacle, coming after commitment has led to the development of virtues like courage and wisdom.

To embrace honor is to uphold a positive and enduring military tradition. Honor as I have defined it is a practice that can have a benign effect on the culture of a service of the armed forces in both a moral and practical sense. It can ennoble military service and reconcile the soldier to that service, perhaps especially in war. It should be instilled in all of its historical and moral richness in those training to be officers.

Honor in Action

In the last section of this paper I would like to offer some advice on the ways in which the ideal and the practice of honor may be enhanced in military education. Many military academies and

schools employ honor systems that prohibit lying, cheating, and stealing. Sometimes the toleration of honor offenses is itself an honor violation. Honor systems are seen to be useful in enforcing standards of academic honesty, maintaining an atmosphere of trust in barracks or dorm, and making the enforcement of certain regulations easier. The function of honor systems can be seen as somewhat manipulative in this sense, but they are largely perceived, both by those subject to them and those entrusted with their enforcement (sometimes the same people) as having a strong moral basis, and as generally supportive or part of the institution's efforts to instill character. But honor systems and their enforcement may sometimes suffer from the lack of a "why." In the absence of a justification for honor, cadets may suffer from divided loyalties with respect to honor, preferring individual loyalty to loyalty to principle. Both the practice of honor systems themselves, and their usefulness in the larger matter of character building, may be enhanced by the consideration of certain ideas and the adoption of certain practices that provide this larger context.

The Honor codes at these institutions should not be allowed to exist in isolation. The personal honesty which is stressed by military school codes of honor should be viewed as only one part, the underpinnings, of the larger practice of honor. This practice should also be shown to be as much a part of their preparation to be officers as is technical knowledge and tactical expertise. The first step in this development, I believe, is to instruct cadets and midshipmen on the historical origins and full meaning of honor. This will be done largely by the cadet or midshipman honor board itself. It should be upheld and seconded by the commissioned officers at an academy. The teaching of honor may be interdisciplinary. The humanities in particular may be put into service to support the enlightened practice of honor. Since the Renaissance is likely the high water mark of honor as a subject for writing, it is not surprising that it forms a central issue in many plays by Shakespeare. The underappreciated work of Curtis Brown Watson and the more recent work of Theodore Meron are helpful guide to role of honor in the plays (Meron, 1999). One could add Phillip Sidney and Richard Lovelace (the author of the line, "I could not love thee, dear, so much/Loved I not honour more.") to this list. Joseph Conrad is a more modern author who is often explicitly concerned with matters of honor, perhaps especially in *Lord Jim*. For a less exotic setting, some literature of the American west, like the novels of Zane Grey, draws on a code of honor imported and updated, as do the writings of Raymond Chandler, whose detective Phillip Marlowe is a clear allusion to the Renaissance man of honor. Examples of adherence to honor may be found in the historical record as well as in imaginative literature. Our own American history is rich with examples of people motivated by honor, from Washington to Lee to George C. Marshall (Best, 1981; Westhusing, 2003).

The three additional parts of honor as I have defined them may be seen to correspond to certain practices within a cadet corps that may be utilized to uphold the idea of honor. Reciprocity is kin to the ideas of comradeship and cohesion which unite the members of military organization one to another. This idea must be stressed at entry level, during the plebe or indoctrination experience for new cadets. One way to stress the idea of reciprocity in practice is to require peer evaluations at the platoon or squad level. The traits of forbearance and restraint become more noticeable and necessary as a cadet gains in responsibility and in authority over others. Most military schools engage in some sort of leadership

evaluation, but not all of them emphasize the need to deal justly and respectfully with subordinates. This aspect of the social contract uniting military units should not be neglected in leadership evaluations. The traits of autonomy and free choice are in effect the pinnacle of the character-instilling goal of an honorable society. Does the cadet follow his principles even when it is difficult to do so? Does he or she make decisions when they must be made? The development of this level of honor can only be attained if those responsible for cadet training are willing to give their charges real responsibility, allowing them to fail, even to embarrass themselves (or their superiors). The "360 degree," upwards and downwards evaluation could yield very interesting results, as could the election of honor officers by their fellow cadets.

Character and Leadership

Honor codes are supportive of an institution's efforts to instill character and leadership in a number of important ways. The day-to-day practice of honorable behavior, even on a small scale and in minor matters, develops the habits which writers from Aristotle onwards have identified as essential to character. Living under an Honor code breeds an almost instinctive predilection and a preference for upright behavior. The words and symbols of the code have four years of impressionable young life to take hold and develop. Honor codes also uphold the sense of trust and of accountability which are necessary to leadership, and never more than in the peer leadership environment of a military academy, in which leadership practices are tested as if in a laboratory. In a setting in which experience and expertise may be lacking or emergent, trust and an underlying sense of responsibility take center stage. Few expect the 21-year old commander of a cadet company to have all of the resources and knowledge of an experienced officer, but he or she is expected to be faithful if nothing else, and the experience teaches leaders and those being led the vital importance of honor in matters large and small.

Honor and Character at the United States Merchant Marine Academy

In the next couple of paragraphs, I will attempt a summary and brief assessment of the status of honor and of leader and character development at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, where I am Director of Ethics and Chracter Development. Kings Point shares many of the traits and traditions of the other service academies, but it is in some ways unique. The students are organized into a Regiment of Midshipmen. They wear uniforms and hold ranks. There is an Honor system in place that is largely run by midshipmen but is overseen by officers and faculty. Nearly all graduates of Kings Point receive commissions in some branch of the armed forces; however, for the majority these will be reserve commissions. The reserve officers will enter the maritime industry as civilians, and most will spend careers as mariners at sea and ashore. In some ways, Kings Point looks like its larger, DOD brethren did a half-century ago. It is a small institution (fewer than 1,000 students) with a demanding, year-round, largely technical curriculum. There are no liberal arts majors at Kings Point. Kings Point midshipmen have three years of classes on shore to meet the requiremts for a bachelor of science degree, a commission (about 25% serve at least a tour on active duty), and a licence as a mate or engineer on merchant vessels of unlimited tonnage. A full year of their four years at Kings Point will be spent at sea, not on a training vessel, but on working merchant vessels operating all over the globe. As sometimes reflected in the journals that they keep at sea, this experience may

have a greater impact on their characters than any other. It can be a rude shock. Some return cynical or impatient with the regimental program, but many mature almost precociously in the course of the four-month and eight-month deployments.

The unique, somewhat divided and distracted nature of the Kings Point community and culture present challenges and opportunities. Institutions like the Honor system and regimental program have to demonstrate their relevance to an "audience" most of whom are preparing for careers in a civilian industry. We have both the vices and virtues of a small institution, moderated somewhat by our "global campus"and by the diversity of careers the students plan to enter. The instruction at Kings Point in such matters as honor, character and leader development has in general mirrored the academic curriculum and a calendar which alternates classroom instruction with time at sea and on the waterfront. It has tended to be "hands on," emphasizing practice over theory. *(Acta Non Verba*, or "words not deeds," as the Academy motto has it.) However, like the other service academies, Kings Point has made efforts to take more control over matters formerly left to chance and osmosis. More assessment is being conducted at a variety of levels, and enhanced guides for leadership training and honor education are in development. The greatest need at Kings Point in this regard may be a concept of leader development that suits our multifaceted culture and mix of traditions maritime, military, and broadly professional and commercial. This too is in development, albeit in an early stage, and it continues to owe a debt to the USMMA membership in SACCA, the Service Academy Consortium on Character Assessment.

The relative paucity of humanities, history, or social science classes at Kings Point is a challenge in the development of thoughtful leaders. As Director of Ethics, I maintain the Ethics and Leadership Program (ELP) which allows upperclassmmen to undertake additional and focused academic and practicum work in theses areas. In my teaching role, I have been able to pursue "ethics (and leadership) across the curriculum" by introducing these matters into required classes such as "The History of Sea Power" and electives like "Joseph Conrad's Short Fiction." Such courses can help to illustrate that matters of matters of honor and leadership are not static or simple, but require a lifetime of learning and reflection of which any academy education is but a single, early stage.

Conclusion

To paraphrase Churchill on democracy, honor may be a bad idea, but it is better than the alternatives (Griffith-Traversy, 2002). Honor developed as a corollary to aristocratic privilege and has been used to justify all kinds of bad behavior, in particular perhaps the misuse of authority and of the unearned increment of power taken on by those who unite themselves to an organization. But honor survives, perhaps because it is indispensable. A worse situation than one in which self-important functionaries go about their day excessively concerned with niggling points of honor is one in which individuals fulfill their duties with no sense of their ethical implications, like members of a hyper-efficient ant colony. Honor may be charged with elitism, but it may be defended by saying that it recognizes inequalities where they exist. A private should not be granted the same latitude as a general or sergeant major.

Before I conclude, I would like briefly to return to James Bowman's work and what I take to be his use of the idea of honor in a *jus ad bellum* context

(2006). To see nations, or our nation, acting out of honor in an international setting requires us to imagine that the members of the community of nations, and not just of nations but of peoples and various splinter-groups of humanity, share at least a core concept of honor to which a nation acting out of honor is in effect appealing. The old concept of honor as a unifying force among officers may be in effect revived by the spectacle of officers of different nations serving together in coalitions to hold at bay the forces of terror and disorder. In *Honor Among Men and Nations, Transformations of an Idea*, Geoffrey Best calls this latest development in the idea and practice of honor (among officers assigned to the United Nations, for example) "supranationalist" (1981, p. 81-82). There is also some evidence from the campus and the field that the pressures of war, deployments, and institutional change may make this a good time to get back to the basics of honesty and personal trustworthiness, and to reinforce the tradition of the military profession as one with unique ties to honor in both its public and private senses.

We must also remember, I believe, what Camus calls the "irrational" element of honor. In our efforts to inculcate honor, we must reach the heart as well as the head. It is not enough to see the objective value of honor. The soldier should love honor by instinct, as he or she loves country or as the parent loves the child. Why should we love honor? Because it is our gift to civilization. It nourishes our sense of belonging to a great tradition. It sustains us in time of greatest need. Let officers not forget that, on the most demanding days of our service, we have had and will have few of the things that make life worth living in normal times. Comfort, safety, love and fun are far away and far from our minds. In such situations, all that we have to sustain ourselves is our own self-respect and our reputation among our peers in the profession of arms, in other words, our soldierly honor, and the promise that something of that will endure even if we do not.

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