

FEATURE ARTICLES

The Essential Partnership: The Four Core Functions of Military Leadership and the Core Values

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ABSTRACT

Junior and mid-level officers and civilian-equivalent ranks in the Air Force well understand the importance of accomplishing the mission and the warrior ethos, as well as taking care of the personnel in the unit. However, many of these leaders demonstrate two military leadership shortcomings: They display a poor understanding of the role and impact of the necessity for good order and discipline, and they have not internalized the primacy of the Core Value of Integrity First. The author proposes four core functions of military leadership to form the foundation for better understanding the tasks military leadership at all ranks must support, and emphasizes the necessity for the Air Force Core Values in making sound leadership decisions and for ensuring that good order and discipline remain the foundation of the American Warrior Ethos.

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Military leadership responsibilities formally start when an officer is commissioned, and when enlisted personnel first pin on their noncommissioned officer (NCO) stripes. From that time forward, these leaders will be faced with an increasing array of challenges: assuring mission accomplishment, managing personnel actions, balancing priorities, working efficiently, following policy and other official guidance, and contributing to a positive work environment, to name several. The complexity of leadership can be daunting, especially during the first several formative years. Yet underlying the many variables leaders must sort through such as the culture and characteristics of their unit, the leadership styles that best fit the personality of the leader and his or her operational environment, and the daily demands on the mission and the unit's personnel, are fundamental constants. These are the core functions that military leadership must satisfy, and the Core Values (e.g., Integrity First, Service Before Self, Excellence in all We Do) provide the essential guidance to make the right decisions in the military environment.

In the studies of leadership attributes to include traits and styles, a common assumption is that the tasks incumbent on military leadership are well understood, but is that a safe assumption? The author's experience and observations during seven years of command and from 30 years of active-duty service, from teaching 810 mid-level officers and civilian equivalents in 50 of the Air University's Applied Leadership and Command (ALC) classes, as well as from his studies in leadership, all suggest that assumption is not accurate.

The responsibilities of military leadership are not as obvious as practitioners and observers might assume, although accomplishing the mission and taking care of the unit's people are commonly accepted central tenets. Expressions such as "Mission first, people always" and "Take care of your people, and the mission will take care of itself" are often mentioned to keep the right priorities, but slogans are only superficially useful and can easily be misconstrued. This paper therefore suggests foundational overarching responsibilities of military leadership fall into four essential core functions. As core functions, these should guide every leader's priorities, decisions, and actions irrespective of rank or position, but they often are not clearly understood, especially by junior and mid-grade leaders.

As part of the ALC classes, each student had to interview a current or graduated commander about the toughest situation they faced and how they handled it, and then the student analyzed the commander's approach and decisions. The interviews and analyses in the essays, as well as the class-wide discussions on selected situations from these interviews, generally brought out the importance of accomplishing the mission and supporting the unit's personnel as would be anticipated, but not necessarily in that order of priority. Additionally, they often presented a very limited understanding of the importance of building and maintaining a foundation of good order and discipline in the unit, of the range of Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) infractions, and of the proper use of administrative, rehabilitative, and punitive disciplinary measures, especially when the students were in support units that did not conduct real-world operations.

Classroom discussions on these topics reinforced that the students often did not consider or downplayed the rehabilitative and punitive side of personnel actions that maintain good order and discipline. The great majority of these students also accepted popular private-sector leadership styles whole-cloth in their leadership philosophies, with little if any analysis of how well those philosophies transferred to both the operational and administrative

sides of the military domain. Private-sector leadership styles and principles certainly can inform military leadership and have formed the foundation for much of that, but the restrictions imposed on a leader by the formal chain of command, the stern provisions of the UCMJ, and the ultimate priority of accomplishing the mission, even at severe risk to personnel, all add a dimension that is often alien to the private sector, short of first responders. And each member of the military plays a role in national defense, even if not serving on the front lines.

As leaders work through all the variables in the issues they will face, they must never forget that they and their people are first and foremost in the profession of arms, whether they are deployed on the front lines or playing a supporting role.

That is why a clear statement of the core functions should set the foundation for any military leadership discussions, analyses, and approaches. Ultimately, the responsibility for achieving these core functions lies with the unit commander, but success in each of these falls on all levels of the unit, with leadership at each level putting in place the building blocks that create a strong, reliable, well-performing unit across all of the core functions.

The Constants of Military Leadership

If you break down what it takes to provide for the defense of our nation, there are four core functions that accrue to military leaders:

- ensuring the unit accomplishes its mission,
- maintaining good order and discipline,
- taking care of the unit's people, and
- stewardship of resources.

All other legitimate actions fall under one or more of these four core functions. An essential part of this proposal is that the latter three are in support of, and subordinate to, the first. If military leaders of all ranks understand these functions, then they will have both a firm foundation and essential priorities upon which to base their leadership from the start.

Accomplishing the Mission

Few in the military would argue against the primacy of the mission, even in times when that can impose exceptional risk and sacrifice. The Preamble to the Constitution gives the role of our military in simple and direct terms: to “provide for the common defence.” That mission is our only charter, and all that we do, peacetime or wartime, should directly or indirectly support the mission. As leaders work through all the variables in the issues they will face, they must never forget that they and their people are first and foremost in the profession of arms, whether they are deployed on the front lines or playing a supporting role.

Yet the mission is dependent on the other three core functions, and leaders will face decisions in balancing all four of them for greatest mission effect, considering both the short and long terms. At times, accomplishing the mission clearly will be the dominant theme, but in many situations, leaders will have to balance the benefit/cost ratio of an exclusive mission focus. As an example, would sending an Airman to advanced training and education benefit the Air Force mission more in the long run, and can workarounds accommodate his or her absence and absorb a potential

dip in squadron mission productivity? On stewardship of resources, might an unrestricted mission focus compromise legality or policy concerning the use of funds and equipment, and if so, is there an acceptable alternative approach? Questions like these illustrate the factors leaders might have to consider in the quest for the best overall solutions that still keep the mission as the top priority in the long term.

The Necessity for Good Order and Discipline

“Be Tough. Set your standards high and insist that your people measure up. Have the courage to correct those who fail to do so. In the long run, your people will be happier. Almost certainly morale will be higher, your outfit better, and your people prouder (Wilson, 1976, in Department of the Air Force, p. 299).”

Sustained mission accomplishment depends on good order and discipline, and junior leaders appear to be well aware of the severity of UCMJ crimes such as wrongful use of controlled substances and sexual assault, but the essays and classroom discussions often revealed less understanding in areas unique to the military such as fraternization, failure to obey, unlawful political activities, hazing, and most importantly, supervisory responsibilities and actions. Good order and discipline have provided the foundation for successful militaries for millennia, and in several ways are even more important today. The complexity of American weapons and support systems demands that proper procedure throughout the tip-to-tail warfighting chain is properly followed. The Barksdale Air Force Base (AFB) incident in 2007 illustrates this well, as six nuclear-tipped cruise missiles were inadvertently loaded on a B-52 at Minot AFB and flown to Barksdale AFB, with over a day passing before this serious breach in nuclear surety was discovered

(Grier, 2019). In addition, the power of our weapon platforms demands careful, well-trained, and accurate application. In our democracy and all-volunteer force, contrary public trends and viewpoints can easily subvert the military professionalism that underlies mission success. Congress recognized the importance of this core function by providing a stringent code of law to maintain good order and discipline in the military: the UCMJ. No other government organization has a legal code as strict and demanding as the UCMJ, nor one that is applicable to all personnel 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is no time off from being a military member and maintaining the discipline deemed necessary for the proper conduct of our forces, and failure to build a strong foundation of good order and discipline in peacetime operations will make the unit that much less prepared for wartime operations. The oath of office to support and defend the Constitution and serve the country is taken not only by officers and enlisted members, but also by Department of the Air Force civilians (Curtis E. Lemay Center, 2015).

Based on the author’s research, good order and discipline issues provide the majority of problems that commanders consider to be their most challenging. Other issues included difficult or toxic superiors, lack of personnel and other resources to meet mission requirements, personnel tragedies such as accidental deaths and suicides, and complex organizational problem sets. The most numerous problems, however, were with sexual harassment and assault, insubordination, fraternization and other inappropriate conduct, intentional misuse of resources, and alcohol and drug-related incidents. Having to (1) determine the facts as best possible, (2) understand UCMJ standards that may have been violated and the attendant legal requirements a violation invokes, (3) determine mitigating circumstances, (4) determine whether appropriate administrative, rehabilitative and/

or punitive measures are in order, and then (5) present the decision to the member—at times a decision that can stop a career or impose court-martial punishments—is not a sequence of events many commanders relish. Yet without the discipline that provides the foundation for the chain of command, principled and proper decision-making, and military standards of conduct, the consequences of poor order and discipline can range from low unit morale to inability to accomplish the mission, and at times, necessitating exceptional actions to include replacing the commander. It is incumbent on military leadership at all ranks to understand this, to set the example, and to maintain good order and discipline among their subordinates, starting with honest performance feedback and other forms of counseling and mentoring.

One tendency here, especially for younger leaders, is to avoid giving negative feedback and missing the opportunity to correct a trait or performance at an early stage. When that initial feedback is ineffective, the option of proceeding to administrative actions such as Letters of Counseling, Letters of Admonishment, and Letters of Reprimand must be considered. Quite often, timely engagement from officers and NCOs within the unit can prevent or moderate a potentially serious disciplinary issue that otherwise would be significant enough to require handling by the commander. The earlier these are addressed, the more likely the recipient will adjust and the issue will have much less impact on the mission or their career. If the common perception that 90% of a commander's time is spent on 10% of his or her people appears to be applicable in a unit, then the commander should start looking at why subordinate leadership has not handled most of these troublesome issues at their level. A commander could reduce his or her workload if he or she sets clear expectations and mentors subordinates in maintaining the standards

inherent in good order and discipline, developing the ability and trust in subordinate leaders to perform their role in preventing, and turning around problems in their early stages.

As General Wilson's quote above brings out, leaders should keep in mind that the great majority of American military personnel take pride in accomplishing the mission, and prefer the work environment that good order and discipline creates. They also respect leaders who intelligently, fairly, and equitably maintain that environment, which contributes significantly to the morale of the unit, and it should be noted that qualities such as morale can align with two or more of the core functions: 1) morale is a factor in mission accomplishment, good order, and discipline, and 2) taking care of your people.

One of the most common breaches of good order that leaders make is failure to support fully higher-level policies and decisions. Commanders are the Air Force's representative to the unit and should be able to provide the rationale for higher-level policy and decisions that affect their personnel, especially on established policies and processes that may be viewed negatively in the unit (e.g., fitness requirements often generate complaints). Leadership throughout the unit must assume that higher-level policies and decisions were rationally made with factual assessment of relevant factors, many of which would likely be beyond the awareness of subordinate personnel. Rather than question that rationale, leadership should support the policies with the same dedication that the commander would expect from subordinates concerning his or her own decisions.

If a leader finds that a policy or decision is unworkable or counterproductive in the unit, it is his or her duty to up-channel those concerns, backed with supporting

rationale, and preferably with an acceptable alternative that meets the intent of the policy or decision. If there is no acceptable alternative, then a waiver should be requested. If those actions are unsuccessful, then leaders must apply the policy or decision to best effect, taking ownership. All of this assumes that the policy or decision is lawful. There never should be any confusion about the imperative to fully resist unlawful orders.

Taking Care of Your People

America's all-volunteer force is the best in the world and arguably is the primary reason that the U.S. military is so formidable (Dempsey, 2015). Many would suggest that America's lead in military technology is its principal advantage, but maintaining and employing complicated, high-technology weapon systems take exceptional operators and support personnel. Additionally, employing those platforms in joint, multi-domain warfare in complex operational environments, requires not only a high level of professionalism but also a culture of taking personal responsibility and initiative. All of that requires continuous training and exercising, as well as operational leadership from experienced noncommissioned and commissioned officers. A key to this is retention, and the American military takes care of its people and enjoys a return on that investment with mature leadership, improved capability, and high morale (Briding, 2016).

That brings up two dimensions to all levels of leadership, especially at the squadron level. The first is directing, enabling, and motivating personnel, giving them the necessities to focus their work, remove barriers to productivity, and keep morale high—all with mission accomplishment as the ultimate goal. The second is the personal support side of leadership,

providing assistance when an individual Airman needs help, to include engaging base support services.

The military provides exceptional individual and family support, necessitated by the intent to develop and retain personnel who often have to relocate, deploy, and operate under demanding and dangerous conditions while leaving the family behind. From a headquarters perspective, the Air Force's 321,000 military personnel are an essential resource that has to be managed wisely across all specialty codes to meet current and future Air Force manning requirements (AFPC, 2018). From a leadership perspective, the unit is made up of unique individuals that need

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the proper support to do their work; training and education to advance into higher levels of capability and responsibility; career progression based on merit; and as appropriate, individual and family support that keep their personnel positively contributing to the unit.

However, leaders should keep in mind the words of Gen. Ron Fogleman, the 15th Chief of Staff of the Air Force: "The essence of the American military is to fight and win America's wars. We're not a social actions agency, we're not an employment agency" (Fogleman,

2017). We are in the warfighting business, not the rehabilitation business, yet we owe it to our people to determine if rehabilitation is appropriate when discipline issues come up, and provide rehabilitation and support services when those are likely to return an Airman to productive service. As much as the human dimension comes into play at the squadron level, commanders must make final decisions with compassion, but still based on the needs of the Air Force.

Stewardship of Resources

Even without the challenges imposed by limited budgets, leaders at all levels are obligated to ensure personnel, equipment and materiel, and funds are used for their intended purpose and without waste. This puts leadership into a management role, often delegated to others in the unit, but still the ultimate responsibility of the supervisor and commander. With delegation, maintaining responsibility requires oversight, and a significant number of issues fall under improper use of government resources, whether that improper use was unwitting or with intent. Training in the legalities and proper procedures of resource usage can greatly minimize unwitting usage if the importance of that training is emphasized and leadership institutionalizes it, and oversight procedures will dissuade or detect intentional violations.

Oversight does not have to be complicated, and is normally built into unit functions. Squadrons generally have resource advisors that are trained in fiscal requirements and track expenditures; proper use of equipment and materiel periodically can be reviewed by the operations chain; and the First Sergeant, Operations Officer, and senior NCOs should provide timely feedback on personnel management, operational issues, and shortfalls. Commanders must

ensure that effective oversight procedures are in place, that intermediate leadership understands their role in oversight, and that resource stewardship is faithfully

The other dimension of stewardship of resources is innovation, finding ways to more effectively and efficiently conduct the mission and its supporting processes (and a good argument can be made that innovation should be considered as a corollary to mission accomplishment). With limited budgets, clever adversaries, and a complex battlespace, the necessity for innovation to keep America's military dominant across the threat spectrum is a necessary theme, but implementing pragmatic and effective innovation cultures and programs is not a simple task. The downside of a poorly executed program leads to jaded views about the concept of innovation in a structured environment such as the military. What squadron leadership often neglects is that the operational expertise and experience of their personnel, when properly enabled, can significantly improve effectiveness and efficiency in standard operating procedures as well as provide useful applications of off-the-shelf technologies to existing processes, and recommendations may at times lead to breakthrough results. The enemy of innovation is the inertia often found in the middle ranks of leadership, driven by a preference to maintain the more comfortable and predictable status quo.

The companion piece to process innovation in the unit is leveraging diversity to disrupt dogma and groupthink (e.g., 'We always do it that way,' or 'If it's not broken, don't fix it') by encouraging fresh perspectives and ideas for improvement. As stressed by former Air Force Chief of Staff General David Goldfein, "diversity of background, experience, demographics, perspectives, thought and organization" all can play a role (USAF,

2018). It is essential for unit's leadership to encourage new ideas from everyone in the unit, to see that the avenues for suggestions and process improvements are in place, and to duly consider, objectively vet, and properly validate recommendations from subordinates.

The prominence of these four core functions will vary across the units that are spread across the tip-to-tail of the warfighting spectrum, and whether they are in their wartime or peacetime mode. Accomplishing the operational or support mission will remain as top priority regardless, and good order and discipline will be a critical enabler, especially under prolonged stress. It should also be noted that as the military faces budget restrictions, the stewardship of resources function will have a growing impact on operational capability, at times directly affecting readiness.

'Gray-Zone' Leadership and The Air Force Core Values

Balancing the core functions of mission, good order and discipline, taking care of your people, and stewardship of resources can be a complex challenge under the best of circumstances, often putting leaders in a 'gray zone' of making decisions when the conditions do not lead to obvious solutions. When factors such as deployments and high operations tempo overly stress personnel and their families, limited resources inhibit mission accomplishment, and additional duties and training add to the personnel load, leaders will be faced with balancing the core functions for the best overall benefit to the mission of the Air Force, including calling a time-out on the mission when the demand on people and equipment will have more of an adverse effect than pushing mission accomplishment. Gray-zone leadership requires as much accurate information as time and circumstance allow, good analysis and judgment, and a bedrock value system upon which to base sound solutions—a value system that is built to

meet the demands of the core functions. Working in combination with the core functions, the Air Force Core Values provide the values to guide the decision making and personal performance our nation has come to expect.

The core values are: Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do. In a recent Pew Research Center Survey, 83% of the Americans interviewed expressed that they have confidence in the military "to act in the best interests of the public" (Shane, 2019). That trust comes from the professionalism of the forces and the mission successes under the most demanding conditions, and is based on the importance of the core values each Service maintains. The Air Force Core Values reflect why public trust is so high. Yet a significant number of junior leaders in the Air Force appear to treat these Core Values more as a mantra than as bedrock values that should shape the top priorities of leadership. As part of the ALC classes, students were asked to give what they considered to be the most important leadership characteristic or trait. Of 810 students, many different leadership attributes were mentioned, but only 23% gave integrity as the top attribute, and six classes did not list integrity at all. In contrast, the Stockdale Group in the College of Naval Warfare surveyed much more seasoned leadership across the military, and found that out of 107 flag officer and Senior Executive Service civilian respondents, integrity was the clear top selection (Ledlow, 2020). This disparity may suggest that the importance of integrity may become more significant and meaningful as leadership decisions carry more weight and violations of integrity have greater impact, and as a result of continued emphasis in intermediate and senior leadership education and training. In the ALC classes taught by the author, he selected for class discussion several of the problems faced by the commanders in the student interviews. As a result of

those discussions, a significant number of students changed their vote on the most important trait to integrity, reinforcing the value of the class discussions about significant examples of lack of integrity in affirming the Integrity First Core Value.

The current Core Values are the product of an evolutionary approach to capture the essence of conduct required in the Air Force, spurred by the scandal caused when U.S. forces apparently acted on their own initiative to bomb North Vietnamese missile sites in 1971-72, contrary to the public rules of engagement (Air Force News, 2010).¹ Responding to this, the Air Force Chief of Staff at the time, General John Ryan, issued a policy letter that included the following:

Integrity--which includes full and accurate disclosure--is the keystone of military service. Integrity in reporting, for example, is the link that connects each flight crew, each specialist, and each administrator to the commander in chief. In any crisis, decisions and risks taken by the highest national authorities depend, in large part, on reported military capabilities and achievements. In the same way, every commander depends on accurate reporting from his forces. Unless he is positive of the integrity of his people, a commander cannot have confidence in his forces. Without integrity, the commander in chief cannot have confidence in us . . . Integrity can be ordered but it can only be achieved by encouragement and example (Tower & Dunsford, 1996).

Eight years later, the Air Force Academy's Dean of the Faculty came up with a set of Core Values centered on integrity, service, and excellence, and in 1994, the Academy refined that into the Core Values the Air Force uses today. In the following year, the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ronald Fogleman, in partnership with the Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila Widnall, formalized and institutionalized the Core Values across the Air Force, starting with the top generals and delivering it to all personnel through a three-phase implementation plan (Tower & Dunford, 1996). It was clear that the Core Values were intended to be professional values applied in daily activities, not simply a listing of personal values that one might call upon when put into combat. These new Core Values were written as succinct, directive expectations. The focus on a code of conduct for daily operations in peacetime as well as wartime was quite intentional, and during the development and implementation of the new code, exceptionally damaging issues to the Air Force came from lack of integrity and personal interest taking priority over service obligations, some at the top levels of leadership. The lack of proper accountability and discipline imposed following the Black Hawk shot down over Iraq in April of 1994; the Fairchild Air Force Base B-52 crash in June of 1994; the CT-43 crash in Croatia in April, 1996; and the general discharge of Lieutenant Kelly Flinn in May of 1997, among other incidents, all reinforced the pressing need for the integrity of commanders to keep the mission and good order and discipline at the forefront of their decisions. It should be noted that squadron, group, and wing commanders were relieved of their commands over these incidents.

¹ It should be noted that at the time, the 7th Air Force commander, General John Lavelle, was labeled as a rogue officer waging war by his own rules, but information released in 2007 provided evidence that he was following authorization from President Richard Nixon.

As with any other corporate value system, the success or failure of the Core Values depends upon their relevance, the effectiveness of the education programs

to instill them into all personnel, and perhaps most importantly, the constant reinforcement provided by leadership throughout the ranks. Their relevance for the profession of arms is unquestionable, and the leadership factor is provided primarily by commanders and their subordinate leadership setting the right example and holding personnel accountable to those standards.

The Warrior Ethos: Merging Mission Accomplishment, Good Order and Discipline, and the Core Values

Warrior ethos is the embodiment of the warrior spirit: tough mindedness, tireless motivation, an unceasing vigilance, a willingness to sacrifice one's life for the country, if necessary, and a commitment to be the world's premier air, space and cyberspace force (AFI 36-2014, 2019).

The Air Force warrior ethos is the capstone of the American profession of arms. The U.S. Constitution establishes the military mission of national defense and implements civilian control; the UCMJ sets the rigorous standards of conduct expected from military personnel that sets them apart from civilian counterparts; the core functions describe the requirements incumbent upon military leadership to defend the nation and maintain those standards of conduct; the Core Values provide the top priorities that should guide all Air Force personnel in their decisions and actions; and this collective foundation then culminates in the Air Force warrior ethos.

Self-discipline and the courage to put the mission ahead of self-form the essence of the warrior ethos, as the passage above from the Air Force Instruction on

Pre-Commissioning Programs brings out. The Core Value of Service Before Self includes duty and loyalty, and military leaders should consider that the virtue of loyalty to the mission, to the unit, and to its people must be practiced within the context of good order and discipline. In the stress of combat operations, whether conducted in the field or at home station, the discipline necessary to perform to warfighting standards expected of our military must already have been infused into the unit. Loyalty often rises to the prime virtue when lives are at risk, but it should never supersede the necessity to follow the law of armed

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combat, nor should it come before the necessity for Integrity First in peacetime operations. Loyalty is the glue that binds a well-performing team, but when an Airman 'looks the other way,' particularly in peacetime operations, the discipline of the unit is corrupted, integrity and professionalism are left behind, and trust is undermined. As difficult as it might be to properly address a comrade that has violated the UCMJ, no matter how minor the infraction might appear, not holding an Airman accountable out of loyalty is a misplacement of values and undercuts the essence of the warrior ethos.

Recommendations for Practical Leadership

The following recommendations are intended to reinforce the concepts of the core functions of military leadership and the importance of the Core Values. A clear understanding of the core functions of military leadership should be the first objective of leadership training starting at the entry level and should be reinforced through continuing professional military education, to anchor leadership training and education in priorities, attributes, styles, and techniques that will follow throughout an Airman's time of service.

Revise Air Force Operational-Level Doctrine, Volume 2, Leadership

The Air Force's doctrine on leadership is encapsulated in this Volume, and it should lay the principles for military leadership across the Total Force. The core functions of leadership should start this volume, whether the core functions as stated in this paper are agreed, or a variation is created.

Chapter 2: Leading Airmen, begins with a definition of leadership and then mentions the following:

The Air Force expects its members to develop leadership skills. The nature and extent of that development depends on the member's status: officer, enlisted, or civilian. The Air Force expects an officer to move quickly through the levels of leadership, from tactical expertise into operational competence.

From this start, the chapter focuses on warfighting proficiency and spirit, certainly commendable and in support of the first core function. It also brings in the importance of understanding the perspective of *Airmindedness*, to include viewing the Air Force's role

as a strategic asset, although this is less a leadership trait and more of an operational perspective. It discusses the leadership transition for officers from tactical expertise to organization-wide operational competence, and the leadership skills that best produce results when working solutions across the organization. An excellent discussion on the Core Values is also provided.

Unfortunately, the only significant reference to good order and discipline is in the subchapter *The Total Force: Officers* (p. 9), and is directed at commanders:

Federal law states commanders in the Air Force are required to be good examples of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination; to be vigilant in "inspecting the conduct of all persons who are placed under their command"; to guard against "dissolute and immoral practices" and correct those guilty of them; and to promote and safeguard the morale, well-being, and general welfare of the officers and enlisted personnel under their command.

This begs the question of whether the proper emphasis is provided on this critical core function that all leadership must fully support. A junior or mid-level leader reading this volume would take away the importance of mission and warrior spirit (or ethos), but would have little if any understanding of the importance of good order and discipline. Waiting to present this core function to commander-selects during their indoctrination program leaves the void that has shown up in the ALC essays and discussions. Putting the core functions of military leadership at the start of the chapter on leadership would provide a much better orientation for the reader, and would better frame leadership training and education outcomes.

The author would suggest that the Core Values subchapter forms a good foundation for leaders to understand the Core Values, but true buy-in is better reinforced with concrete examples of what a lack of the Core Values, and especially a lack of integrity, can do to undermine the mission. Actual examples discussed in the ALC classes proved to be more effective in internalization than discussions on why they were important. The case example given in Chapter 2 readily supports the value of Service Before Self in the context of warfighting spirit; additional emphasis from one or two examples that demonstrate the impact from lack of integrity would strengthen this discussion.

Understand the UCMJ and Supervisory Responsibilities

Stress the importance of junior-officers understanding the UCMJ and their supervisory responsibilities that support good order and discipline, starting in commissioning programs and by providing reinforcement throughout officer training programs. Air Force Handbook 1, Airman, details an excellent training path for enlisted personnel as they attain non-commissioned and senior non-commissioned officer status. Its sections on leadership, standards of conduct, and military justice cover traits, styles, and responsibilities of leadership, and the handbook also reviews UCMJ articles, non-judicial punishment, and administrative discipline measures, providing supervisors the means to lead, motivate, and, when necessary, to correct and discipline their subordinates. This comprehensive approach to military leadership gives enlisted leaders the tools to maintain good order and discipline among the enlisted ranks.

The training for newly commissioned and junior officers, however, does not appear to provide a firm understanding of the UCMJ, nor of administrative measures used to correct subordinates. Air Force

Instruction 36-2014, *Personnel Pre-Commissioning Programs*, mentions in the overview that pre-commissioning programs develop officers who “have internalized the Air Force’s core values, live by a high moral code, treat others with mutual respect, and demonstrate a strong sense of ethics (Leader of Character)” (Manasco 2019, p. 3). Yet while its institutional outcomes address ethical leadership, warrior ethos, and taking care of people, the roles of the UCMJ and corrective and disciplinary measures are not mentioned. (Manasco, 2019).

The Air University (AU) Squadron Officer School’s new *LEAD to Prevail* curriculum focuses on interpersonal skills, group and multidisciplinary approaches to problem solving, and leading in the joint warfare domain. Squadron Officer School collaborated with the AU Leader Development Course (LDC) for Squadron Command, and the public affairs statement of the new curriculum mentions the following:

“Our LDC course targets squadron leaders one to three years from command. We do that so our graduates have time to develop and refine the concepts they studied with us,” said Lt. Col Justin Longmire, LDC director. “However, how awesome would it be if future squadron leaders could be working on these concepts and skills for five to 10 years before taking command? How much more prepared will they be when they’re tapped on the shoulder and asked to take on the sacred burden of command? That’s the value in delivering this human domain content earlier in a leader’s career” (Berube, 2020).

However, as with the commissioning institutional competencies, there is no mention of the leadership responsibilities associated with good order and discipline in this description of the curriculum, so

any exposure to the corrective and disciplinary side of managing subordinates does not appear to be part of the formal training for junior officers.

The intent to develop multidimensional leaders to handle complex environments is laudatory, but when the fundamentals of good order and discipline are not presented and reinforced in officer leadership training until approaching squadron command, junior officers in the Air Force will have a poor understanding of the essential foundation of the unit, its good order and discipline, and their essential role in maintaining that foundation.

Conclusion

Understanding the core functions that stop at the commander's desk is essential to laying the groundwork for an effective military unit, and the leadership from the most junior ranks up through the commander have an essential role in the accomplishment of those core functions. Whatever the leadership styles and attributes leaders might use, those preferences must be productive in maintaining these core functions. The mission is critically dependent on maintaining good order and discipline, a core function that is often addressed more in reaction rather than in a proactive approach that better manages emerging issues. Leadership throughout the chain of command must take the high ground to prevent, assess, and firmly, objectively handle personnel issues among their subordinates. All four core functions are a necessary part of the military leadership regardless of the unit and operational context, but the mission itself must take precedence, and the Core Values provide leaders the value system to make the right decisions that keep the core functions on track for the best interest of the Air Force and the nation it serves.

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