



# Character Development of U.S. Army Leaders

## The Laissez-Faire Approach

*Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.<sup>1</sup>*

Col. Brian M. Michelson, U.S. Army

— General H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr.

**T**HE DESIGN, GENERATION, support, and ethical application of land-power often presents military leaders with moral dilemmas that are unique to the profession of arms. In this morally and ethically volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, the quality of a leader's character, who they are morally and ethically as a person, has a direct impact on their ability to make the correct discretionary judgments required by the profession. As the Army moves toward full implementation of the doctrines of both mission command and The Army Profession, the Army will require even more from its leaders at all levels, especially its junior ones.<sup>2</sup> These requirements fall in two primary areas: first, the Army will grant its leaders additional autonomy in order to "enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent," and second, the Army will expect leaders to display an even higher level of character in the use of this autonomy.<sup>3</sup> Given the importance that the Army places on the character of its leaders, an important question quickly emerges: Will the Army's current approach to developing the personal character of its leaders meet this challenge of its increased expectations? To examine this question, we must consider how the Army defines character, how it develops it, and whether or not its current methods are meeting the challenges facing the Army both today and in the future. We will begin by looking at how the Army approaches character in its current leadership doctrine.

### The Army's Doctrinal View of Character: An Institutional Overview

The Army currently defines leadership as "the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization."<sup>4</sup> An Army Leader is simply "anyone who by virtue of assumed role or assigned responsibility inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals."<sup>5</sup> The Army uses

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PHOTO: U.S. Army Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of U.S. Central Command, emerges from a camouflaged trench in the desert while visiting with troops from other countries during Operation Desert Shield, 1 April 1992. (DOD)

a leadership-requirements model to describe its expectations of its leaders in two broad categories: attributes and competencies. Attributes are primarily internal traits and consist of character, presence, and intellect, while competencies are primarily related to actions and skills that consist of leading, developing, and achieving.<sup>6</sup> While all of these attributes and competencies are important, the only one that the Army views as an inseparable component of successful leadership is character.<sup>7</sup>

As an attribute, the Army defines character as the sum total of an individual's moral and ethical qualities,<sup>8</sup> the essence of "who a person is, what a person believes, and how a person acts."<sup>9</sup> The Army defines the four component parts of character as—

- The internalization of the Army Values.
- Empathy.
- Commitment to the Warrior Ethos/Service Ethos.
- Discipline.

In further describing character, the Army identifies two central components of character: values and beliefs.<sup>10</sup> Beliefs are defined as closely held convictions accepted as true, while values are beliefs that shape an individual's actions.<sup>11</sup> While personal beliefs and values are central to a leader's identity, it is an individual's personal "understanding of oneself . . . [that] . . . ultimately determines a leader's character."<sup>12</sup> The logical flow of this doctrine is itself weak as it travels from the four component parts of character (Army Values, Empathy, Commitment, and Discipline) to two central components (individual values and beliefs), and ultimately to self awareness.

In summary, the Army clearly states that character is "essential to effective leadership" and that it is based on personal values, beliefs, and ultimately self-understanding.<sup>13</sup> As essential as character is to leader effectiveness, it is important to understand how the Army approaches character development within the context of its doctrine on leader development, a subordinate component of its leadership doctrine.

Unlike the development of the other five attributes and competencies of the Army leadership-requirements model, Army doctrine identifies character development as primarily an individual responsibility.<sup>14</sup> This key conceptual principle is a hold-over from previous doctrine.<sup>15</sup> It has effectively resulted in a "hands-off," or *laissez-faire*,<sup>16</sup> institutional

approach to the development of personal character in Army leaders.

While the Army clearly describes the character expectations of its leaders in ADRP 1-0, *The Army Profession*, it offers little more than a limited number of sweeping generalities regarding the

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behaviors and actions it would like to see at the individual, leader, and unit levels of character development.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, and most importantly, the Army's collective doctrine is virtually silent regarding the actual process of how individuals should assess and develop their own personal character.<sup>18</sup> This approach, while initially puzzling, makes more sense when we consider the three key assumptions upon which the doctrine is based.

## **Assumptions Underlying the Army's Doctrine on Character Development**

The Army's *laissez-faire* approach to personal character development is based on three important doctrinal assumptions about how soldiers, and specifically leaders, develop personal character:

- Army soldiers and leaders *inherently* know what is right and want to live ethically.<sup>19</sup>
- Consistent ethical conduct develops strong character.<sup>20</sup>
- Leaders will develop personal character commensurate to their increasing responsibilities through self-guided study, reflection, experience, and feedback.<sup>21</sup>

These assumptions serve as a foundation for the Army's doctrinal viewpoint and explain why the Army believes that its *laissez-faire* approach will produce the desired institutional results. These three core assumptions invite two critical questions: Why did the Army make these assumptions about character, and, more importantly, are they



valid? While answering the first question aids in understanding the reasoning behind these assumptions, the far more important question involves their actual validity.

## Analysis

In examining why the Army may have made these assumptions, we must consider whether or not the Army has a broadly understood and agreed upon causal theory for how it can assess and develop the personal character of its leaders. If it does, then the selection of assumptions would logically flow from this theory. If, however, the Army does not have a reasonable theoretical foundation, then the acceptance of its assumptions likely resulted from either an accrual of conventional wisdom that lacked critical examination, or the Army simply not realizing that it is making major assumptions in this area.

Unfortunately, a recent study by the Army's Center for the Army Professional Ethic indicates that the latter two possibilities (accrual of unexamined conventional wisdom and/or a lack of awareness of its assumptions) are the more likely expla-

nations. The study indicates that the "policies and governing documents for Army leader development are disjointed and dated. Roles and responsibilities for leader development are not clearly defined and are sometimes conflicting."<sup>22</sup> Yet, in its efforts to meet this challenge, "the Army still lacks an integrated Human Development effort . . . [and] . . . internal subject matter expertise in the behavioral, social, and other Human Development sciences," and must therefore "overly rely on external experts to implement crucial programs."<sup>23</sup> In summary, the evidence indicates that the Army lacks a broadly understood and agreed upon causal theory for how it can assess and develop the personal character of its leaders. While this is important, the second critical question remains: "Are these three assumptions about character development valid?"

**Assumption: Army soldiers and leaders *inherently* know what is right and want to live ethically.** The assumption that soldiers and leaders inherently know what is right and want to live ethically can be challenged both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data are available from many sources,



U.S. Air Force, Senior Airman Christopher Gross

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Silvernale, a platoon sergeant with Comanche Company, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment (Airborne), yells out commands to his unit while on an air assault in the Chugach Range, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, 12 May 2011.

and four in particular provide an objective and broad description of current trends:

- The Army's 2012 report entitled, "Generating Health and Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset," otherwise known as the "Army Gold Book."

- Technical Report 2012-1: The 2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Main Findings.

- Technical Report 2011-1: The 2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Volume 2, Main Findings.

- Technical Report 2011-3: Antecedents and consequences of toxic leadership in the U.S. Army: A two year review and recommended solutions (Toxic Leadership Report).

Two important caveats must be acknowledged. First, statistics are primarily descriptive and can only be as accurate as the underlying reporting. Many offenses are handled under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice rather than criminal proceedings, and in some cases, offenses simply go unreported. Second, general officer data were not included in either CASAL report referenced above. Even accounting for these mitigating factors, the documented trends are concerning and cast significant doubt on the validity of this first assumption, that Army soldiers and leaders inherently know what is right and want to live ethically.

The Army *Gold Book* indicates that in 2011, 6 percent of the active duty population (42,698 soldiers) committed over 78,000 offenses, including:<sup>24</sup>

- 2,811 violent felonies.
- 28,289 nonviolent felonies.
- 47,162 misdemeanors.<sup>25</sup>

In looking at the raw crime statistics reported in the Army *Gold Book* and doing some preliminary analysis, some interesting trends emerge. By comparing the number of offenses relative to their specific segment of the Army population, one can draw two important data points.

First, as rank increases, criminal misconduct decreases. While this could be accounted for in many ways, the causation for this drop is not adequately explained either by the study or by the Army's leader-development model. This drop could be caused by a number of factors, such as the elimination of offenders from the service at lower levels, the maturing effects of age and family responsibilities, and the

results of the Army's past developmental construct for character development. Second, and most importantly, 31 percent of the documented, non-UCMJ, criminal acts in the Army are committed by leaders, specifically NCOs and commissioned officers. This statistic alone casts doubt on the validity of the Army's assumption that "Army soldiers and leaders know what is right and want to live ethically." While these statistics provide a useful starting point, we can gain additional insights to further test the validity of this assumption by considering the two most recent CASAL reports.

The 2010 and 2011 CASAL reports provide rich data regarding the views leaders have on the character attributes (as defined by doctrine) and ethics of other leaders. Time series data from the 2011 CASAL report initially offers some encouraging statistics, especially regarding the improved perception subordinates have of their superior's core competencies.

However, a closer look also indicates that these perceptions have plateaued, in some cases begun to decline. More importantly, nearly a third of subordinates (30 percent) do not believe that their superiors either create a positive environment or lead by example.<sup>26</sup> Additional survey data regarding three of the four attributes of an Army leader's character (Army Values, Warrior Ethos, and Empathy) indicates that the respondents still view approximately one fifth of their leaders as marginal or poor in one or more

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of these most critical leadership attributes.<sup>27</sup> These disappointing findings highlight the developmental challenge the Army faces in getting the actions and conduct of its collective leadership to match espoused values.

The 2010 CASAL report offers interesting insights into the perceived ethics of the Army's leadership. This section was not surveyed in the 2011 report so recent trends are not available, but the 2010 data still provides useful insights. First, over a third (37 percent) of leaders surveyed in 2010 believed that "senior leaders are more concerned



(National Archives)

**Gen. George C. Marshall, U.S. Army chief of staff, and Gen. Henry “Hap” Arnold, commanding general, U.S. Army Air Forces, arrive at the residence of Prime Minister Winston Churchill for a dinner given by the British prime minister for President Truman and Soviet leader Josef Stalin during the Potsdam Conference, 23 July 1945.**

that subordinates achieve results rather than the methods used.”<sup>28</sup> Additionally, respondents indicated that while 83 percent believed that their immediate superior demonstrated the Army values, only 72 percent believed that the leaders they interacted with displayed good ethical behavior.<sup>29</sup> The perception that over a quarter of Army leaders do not display good ethical behavior runs contrary to the Army’s assumption that “Army soldiers and leaders know what is right and want to live ethically.” While these data provide valuable insights into the current perceptions of Army leaders, an assessment of the validity of this assumption would be premature without examining actual leadership practices as documented in the Army’s 2011 report on toxic leadership.

The 2011 Toxic Leadership Report was the Army’s first exclusive report on toxic leadership and relied heavily on the CASAL reporting data sets from both 2009 and 2010 as well as other academic studies. The report documented several dangerous trends within Army leadership. The report broadly defines toxic leaders as those who “work to promote themselves at the expense of their subordinates, and usually do so without considering long-term ramifications to their subordinates, their unit, and the Army profession.”<sup>30</sup>

The report frames the corrosive effects of toxic leadership in its impact on “soldier well-being, retention, and mission accomplishment” and clearly states that “the best soldiers are the ones who are most likely to be affected by toxic leaders.”<sup>31</sup> Paradoxically, toxic leaders are often viewed as effective and reasonably likely to achieve increased responsibilities.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps their greatest damage to the Army as a profession comes from the ability of toxic leaders to produce a disturbing and self-replicating legacy whereby 18 percent of subordinates admit to emulating them.<sup>33</sup> As this would be an unflattering self admission, one can only wonder if the actual number of emulators is higher.

In assessing just how much toxic leadership exists in the Army, the survey data are not encouraging. The report documents that “not only is toxic leadership prevalent, but the majority of leaders considered it a problem,” to include:

- 55 percent of field grade officers.
- 61 percent of company grade officers.
- 60 percent of warrant officers.
- 60 percent of senior NCOs.
- 66 percent of junior NCOs.<sup>34</sup>



While the report clarifies perceptions of toxic leaders and attempts to separate them from “derailed” leaders, “the vast majority of U.S. Army leaders observed a toxic leader in the last year, and over a third indicated that they had first-hand experience with three or more toxic leaders.”<sup>35</sup> The study closely links toxic leadership to ethics, which perhaps helps to explain why 12 percent of respondents in a 2011 Army survey stated that “they had been pressured to cover up issues or act unethically.” Eighteen percent “agreed that it would be hazardous to their career to speak up about ethical violations.”<sup>36</sup>

In examining the data describing the number of toxic leaders as well as the number of “derailed leaders,” one must naturally ask a difficult, but simple question: why does toxic leadership exist to the extent that it does in the force? Answering this question quickly becomes uncomfortable when we consider the possibilities. Perhaps individuals have failed to develop themselves properly and the Army as an institution has failed to properly assess, evaluate and eliminate them, or, alternatively, perhaps that a significant number of Army leaders are simply unprepared and unable to serve in a profession whose “values and standards are too high for just anyone to live by.”<sup>37</sup>

In considering the evidence provided by leader criminal behavior, the survey data on perceptions of other leader character and ethics, and the degree of toxic leadership in the Army, one cannot help but conclude that the Army’s assumption that soldiers and leaders as a group inherently know what is right and want to live ethically is seriously in question if not conceptually flawed.

**Assumption: Consistent ethical conduct develops strong character.** The second assumption the Army makes is that individuals develop strong character by engaging in consistently ethical behavior, or more simply, they become good by doing good. This is a reversal of the “Be, Know, Do” pattern in which the “Be,” or character, in conjunction with the “Know,” drives the “Do,” or action. Army doctrine appears to contradict itself when it states that “ethical conduct must reflect genuine values and beliefs.”<sup>38</sup> In effect, the Army proposes that actions must be in accordance with our values and beliefs (character), and that character is developed by correct conduct and proper actions. This circular logic produces an

obvious “chicken or the egg” argument; one that Army doctrine neither adequately addresses nor resolves.

While no group of individuals can be expected to be entirely without the moral failings common to humanity, the number of senior leaders felled annually by unethical conduct requires us to at least consider whether the cause in each case was either a brief lapse in judgment, a change in the nature of an individual’s character for the worse, or whether the leader’s true character may have been hidden at lower ranks through pragmatic adherence to rules at the expense of genuine character development. If the latter case is true in some situations, then the implication is that skillful rule following at lower levels can potentially cover character flaws. These individuals were able to provide the appearance, or “presence” in terms of Army leadership doctrine, of character until such time as they were promoted to a higher level of responsibility than their character could handle. This, in effect, could be interpreted as the “Peter Principle” as applied to character in which people are “promoted beyond the level of [their] ability.”<sup>39</sup> The weaknesses pointed out by both the beliefs/actions argument (circular logic) along with the Peter



**U.S. soldiers and counterparts of the Afghan National Army halt while marching during Operation Saguaro in Bargay valley, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, 27 February 2012.** (U.S. Army, Sgt. Trey Harvey)

Principle (promotion beyond ability) as applied to character serve to cast serious doubt on the adequacy of the assumption that actions develop character.

**Assumption: Leaders will develop personal character commensurate to their increasing responsibilities through self-guided study, reflection, experience, and feedback.** The assumption that leaders will develop personal character commensurate to their increasing responsibilities through self-guided study, reflection, experience, and feedback not only raises some tricky questions that are not adequately answered, but also conflicts with current Army survey data. Even assuming that leaders will find adequate time to effectively develop their character as the Army expects, several important questions need to be addressed:

- How does a leader objectively assess his/her own character and then meet the Army's expectation for developing it appropriately?
- Does what an individual studies and reflects upon actually matter? To wit, is studying the philosophical or religious teachings of Buddha, Mohammed, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Plato, Immanuel Kant, Jesus Christ, Nietzsche, or Confucius of equal benefit and value?
- Is unguided reflection useful without the application of adequate critical thinking skills and mentorship?

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- What should commanders be doing to ensure leaders have the correct experiential learning opportunities to develop their personal character?

Army doctrine is nearly silent on what to study and offers remarkably little insight or assistance for

self development to either leaders or to the commanders charged with assisting them. While some commanders publish recommended reading lists, there is little evidence that the lists are actually helpful. The 2011 CASAL report documents that 33 percent of Army leaders do not know “specifically what they need to do to develop as a leader.” That statistic includes 44 percent of company grade officers.<sup>40</sup> This finding is rather surprising as it directly contradicts respondent data indicating a strong belief among leaders in the effectiveness of their own self development efforts.<sup>41</sup> This set of statistics is compounded by data indicating that the leader attribute of “develops others” continues to be the lowest rated core competency across all levels [of leadership]” and leads one to wonder if the Army is not, in fact, expecting the “blind to lead the blind.”<sup>42</sup> Survey data reinforces this conclusion indicating that only 40 percent of leaders believe that the development efforts sponsored by their units have had a positive impact on their development. Sixty percent believe that the unit does not make time for self-development, and nearly half believe that there is little “support for leader development at the unit level.”<sup>43</sup> Only 59 percent of respondents believe that their superiors deliberately identify and place them in experiential leader development opportunities. In summation, only 61 percent of Army leaders are perceived as effective at developing the next generation of leaders.<sup>44</sup> Formal counseling and informal mentoring are clearly Army weaknesses that limit the ability of Army leaders to reach their full potential in all areas, to include their personal character.

Three other factors warrant mention. First, the Army's thinking on this assumption suffers from the same inadequacy discussed earlier regarding the apparent lack of an accepted and understood causal theory of *how* leaders develop character. Second, whose paradigm should a young leader accept and model regarding personal character? In the competing marketplace of useful developmental approaches, which one, or ones, does the Army accept? Which ones does it reject, and why? Third, survey data from the 2012 CASAL study indicates that “Prepares Self” is among the top three highest rated leadership competencies.<sup>45</sup> This initially seems to contradict the previous negative data offered on criminal activity, views on leader character and ethics, and the exercise

of toxic leadership. These seemingly disparate statistics make far more sense if one considers the probability that respondents associated preparing themselves for increased responsibility with tactical and technical skills only, while perhaps not adequately considering their personal character as an area that should be, or even needed to be, improved.

The potential for the “blind leading the blind,” the lack of a causal theory for character development, and the disconnect between survey data regarding “develops self” and actual character-related behaviors, all cast serious doubt on the validity of the assumption that leaders will adequately develop themselves to a level commensurate with their responsibilities.

## Some Conclusions

This paper began by asking whether or not the Army’s approach to developing the personal character of its leaders would meet the challenges posed by implementing the new doctrines of mission command and The Army Profession. While the Army clearly describes what it wants in terms of leader character and behavior, the actual approach it uses to assess and develop the personal character of its leaders is best described as *laissez-faire* in practice.

The primary conclusion of this paper is that the Army’s current *laissez-faire* approach is insufficient to effectively meet the challenges posed by implementation of either mission command or the principles presented in ADRP 1-0, *The Army Profession*. While the topic of character development is often emotionally charged and exceptionally complex, the Army’s own data and statistics point to several serious inconsistencies between what the Army’s doctrine maintains and the documented results it is producing. While many specific observations could be drawn from this research, the following four conclusions emerge as the most compelling and most urgently in need of both attention and action.

**Conclusion one.** *The Army does not have a broadly understood, and agreed upon, causal theory for how it can assess and develop the personal character of its leaders.*

The Army has neither an agreed upon method to assess and develop the personal character of

its leaders (vice merely enforcing behaviors) nor an adequate framework to empower leaders in guiding either their own or their subordinate’s character development.

**Conclusion two.** *The Army’s three primary assumptions about the development of personal character are questionable at best, are potentially seriously flawed, and should be immediately re-examined.* In light of current behavioral and cultural trends within society toward moral diversity and ethical relativism, the Army should immediately re-evaluate both its base assumptions and its approach to character development. If these assumptions are found not to be valid, as suggested here, the Army will have to adjust its doctrinal approach to character development to achieve the desired leader developmental goals.

**Conclusion three.** *The Army does not know, and cannot know with confidence, if the current method of character development will achieve its desired institutional goals.* The lack of a broadly understood and agreed upon framework for how to assess and develop personal character reduces the Army’s ability to evaluate its own efforts in this regard to little more than conjecture. Even the findings of its most recent CASAL report are hotly contested. The quantitative data cited in this paper points to troubling trends. Without a well reasoned framework and means for the assessment and development of personal character, +it seems implausible that the Army will ever know with confidence whether or not its current approach to character development is effective.

**Conclusion four.** *The Army is assuming excessive operational and institutional risk if it does not meet the challenge of developing the personal character of its leaders.* The Army does an exceptional job in developing the technical and tactical abilities of its leaders. And yet, despite character being an inseparable component of successful leadership, the Army seemingly believes that individuals will somehow develop their personal character to the level desired by the Army with little or no clear guidance. This approach carries with it exceptional and largely unarticulated risk to the institution in two primary areas. First, service members at all levels have watched in dismay as far too many senior leaders have failed their own tests of character. In every case, there was an



immediate and significant impact to the mission at hand. Second, in the age of mass media, breaches of character by all ranks will be highlighted evermore widely, clearly, and severely to the citizens we serve. The corrosive effects of these breaches of character strike at the very heart of the Army as a profession and the trust relationships that are so vital both internally to the military and externally with the nation.

## A Clear and Direct Challenge

These observations and conclusions coupled with the prevailing laissez-faire approach to character development document a clear and direct challenge to the Army. But they also provide the Army with an exceptional opportunity to shape its younger generation of leaders if it acts soon. Given that the Millennial Generation is “open to change”<sup>46</sup> and the U.S. military is one of the most respected institutions in America,<sup>47</sup> the Army would likely find a receptive audience to

a fresh and more involved role in the character development of military leaders. A statement from the recent U.S. Army Profession Campaign Annual Report acknowledges this opportunity well: “Army Professionals are looking for the Army to refocus on professional values. Army Professionals voiced broad support for developing, training, and educating specific institutional characteristics that define the Army as a profession, as well as listing the individual attributes that identify Army personnel as professionals.”<sup>48</sup>

The Army will do the profession and the nation a great service by taking a hard and sober look at the role the Army should play in the development of the personal character of its leaders. If the Army does not meet this challenge, it will accept additional risk to mission accomplishment and its professional credibility. Yet within this challenge lies a great opportunity to shape the coming generation of young leaders who may be far more willing to grow than some might think. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. Kevin Kruse, “Norman Schwarzkopf: 10 Quotes on Leadership and War,” *Forbes*, 27 December 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2012/12/27/norman-schwarzkopf-quotes/> (accessed 17 June 2013).

2. “Mission command is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations.” U.S. Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], May 2012), 1.

3. *Ibid.*, 1.

4. U.S. Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, September 2012), 1.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

7. ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, August 2012), 3-1.

8. *Ibid.*, 3-1.

9. ADP 6-22, 5.

10. ADRP 6-22, 3-6. Note: Army doctrine is somewhat confusing on this topic as it tends to use character and integrity interchangeably and clearly emphasizes that integrity, defined as the ability to do what is right, legally and morally, is also a critical part of a leader’s character. See ADP 6-22, 6.

11. *Ibid.*, 3-6.

12. *Ibid.*, 3-5 through 3-6.

13. ADRP 6-22, 3-1.

14. *Ibid.*

15. U.S. Army Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, October 2006), 4-12.

16. Merriam-Webster, *laissez-faire*: “A philosophy or practice characterized by a usually deliberate abstention from direction or interference especially with individual freedom of choice and action.” <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/laissez-faire>> (4 March 2013).

17. Per ADRP 6-22, Army doctrine describes character development as occurring at three levels: individual, leader, and organizational/unit.

At the individual level, the process of building character involves “day-to-day experience, education, self-development, developmental counseling, coaching and mentoring” in which individuals develop themselves through “continual study, reflection, experience, and feedback.” Adoption of “good values and making ethical choices” is a critical part of this process.

At the second level, leaders are expected to “encourage, support, and assess the efforts of their people,” serve as the organization’s “ethical standard bearer,” and set a proper ethical climate. In building a proper climate, leaders are assisted by “the chaplain, staff judge advocate, inspector general, and equal opportunity specialist.”

At the organizational level, units contribute to character development when their “ethical climate nurtures ethical behavior.” This ethical environment will cause soldiers to “think, feel and act ethically,” and thereby “internalize the aspects of sound character.” Army doctrine states that “consistently doing the right thing forges strong character.” While all these aspects of character development are important, the Army is committed to the view that the ultimate determinant of a leader’s character remains founded on an understanding of oneself.

18. ADRP 1, *The Army Profession*, and ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, do not specifically discuss the issue of character development. ADRP 6-22 says virtually nothing on the subject beyond the importance of “continual study, reflection, experience, and feedback.” The chapter discussing the leader competency of “Develops,” and more specifically, the sub-section on “Develops Self” provides no further guidance. Additional clarification is not offered in ADP 7-0, *Training Units and Leaders*, its companion document ADRP 7-0, *The Commander’s Handbook for Unit Leader Development*, or the *Virtual Improvement Center Catalog on Leader Development*.

19. ADP 6-22, 3-6.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, 3-5.

22. U.S. Army, *US Army Profession Campaign Annual Report, April 2, 2012*, 12.

23. *Ibid.*, 16.

24. This number appears to include Reserve Component soldiers who served on active duty during the year as otherwise the 6 percent figure would indicate active duty end strength of over 700,000.

25. U.S. Department of the Army, *Generating Health and Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset* (Washington, DC: GPO, January 2012), 97.

26. U.S. Department of the Army, *Technical Report 2012-1: The 2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership* (CASAL): Main Findings (Washington, DC: GPO, May 2012), 8.

27. *Ibid.*, 12.

28. U.S. Department of the Army, *Technical Report 2011-1: The 2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership* (CASAL): Volume 2, Main Findings (Washington, DC: GPO, May 2012), 41.

29. *Ibid.*, 40.

30. *Ibid.*, 2.

31. U.S. Department of the Army, *Technical Report 2011-3: Antecedents and Consequences of Toxic Leadership in the U.S. Army: A Two Year Review and Recommended Solutions* (Washington, DC: GPO, June 2011), 2.

32. *Ibid.*, 20.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*, 21.

35. *Ibid.*, 35.

36. Ibid., 23.
37. Don M. Snider, "The Moral Corrosion within Our Military Professions," 27 November 2012, <<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/The-Moral-Corrosion-within-Our-Military-Professions/2012/11/27>> (13 December 2012).
38. ADRP 6-22, 3-6.
39. Wikipedia, Peter Principle: The Peter Principle is a belief that, in an organization where promotion is based on achievement, success, and merit, that organization's members will eventually be promoted beyond their level of ability. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Principle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Principle)> (22 February 2013).
40. U.S. Army, *Technical Report 2012-1*, 59.
41. Ibid.
42. U.S. Army, *Technical Report 2011-1*, iii.
43. U.S. Army, *Special Report 2011-1*, 2.
44. Ibid., 1.
45. U.S. Army, *Technical Report 2012-1*, iv.
46. The Pew Research Center, "Millennials: Confident. Connected. Open to Change," 24 February 2010, <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/02/24/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change/>> (January 15, 2013).
47. The Pew Research Center, "War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era," 5 October 2011, <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/10/05/war-and-sacrifice-in-the-post-911-era/6/#chapter-5-the-public-and-the-military>> (15 January 2013).
48. U.S. Army, *US Army Profession Campaign Annual Report, April 2, 2012*, 6.



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Written by Dr. Aaron Jackson of the Australian Defence Force Joint Doctrine Centre, *The Roots of Military Doctrine* offers a lively and lucid examination of the ways in which armies over the last 200 years have constructed doctrinal foundations. Jackson's study gives close attention to the ways that U.S. Army doctrine has changed in the last two decades as a way of understanding the direction it might take in the near future.

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