As a leader, you are responsible for understanding and directly transmitting the Army’s values to your soldiers. These values are the foundation for service to the nation. Since the Army’s purpose is to protect the nation and its values, the Army’s ethic must be consistent with national will and values. The oath you took pledged you “to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.” Taken without reservation and regardless of personal sacrifice, this oath is formal and public recognition of your commitment to a professional ethic.

This chapter describes what a leader must BE by discussing beliefs, values, and norms; character; and the professional Army ethic. It also discusses ethical responsibilities and an ethical decision-making process.

**BELIEFS, VALUES, AND NORMS**

**Beliefs**
Beliefs are assumptions or convictions you hold as true about something, concept, or person. They can range from the very deep-
seated beliefs you hold concerning such things as religion and the fundamentals upon which this country was established to recent experiences which have affected your perception of a particular person, concept, or thing. One soldier may believe that duty simply means putting in time from “8 to 5.” Another may believe that duty is selflessly serving your country, your unit, and the soldiers of your unit.

You have beliefs about human nature—what makes people tick. We usually cannot prove our beliefs, but we think and feel that they are true. For example, some people believe that a car is simply a means of transportation. Others believe a car is a status symbol. In contrast, other leaders believe that rewards and punishment are the only way to motivate soldiers. The beliefs of a leader impact directly on the leadership climate, cohesion, discipline, training, and combat effectiveness of a unit.

Values

Values are attitudes about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or things. Values influence your behavior because you use them to decide between alternatives. For example, you may place value on such things as truth, money, friendships, justice, human rights, or selflessness.

Your values will influence your priorities. Strong values are what you put first, defend most, and want least to give up. Individual values can and will conflict at times. If you incorrectly reported a patrol checkpoint, do you have the moral courage to correct the report even if you know your leader will never discover you sent the incorrect report? In this situation, your values on truth and self-interest will collide. What you value the most will guide your actions. In this example, the proper course of action is obvious. There are times, however, when the right course of action is not so clear.

The four individual values that all soldiers (leaders and led) are expected to possess are courage, candor, competence, and commitment. These four values are considered essential for building the trust which must exist for a unit to operate at peak efficiency.

Courage comes in two forms. Physical courage is overcoming fears of bodily harm and doing your duty. Moral courage is overcoming fears of other than bodily harm while doing what ought to be done.

Moral courage is as important as physical courage. It is the courage to stand firm on your values, your moral principles, and your convictions. You show moral courage when you do something based on one of your values or moral principles, knowing that the action may not be in your best interest. It takes special courage to support unpopular decisions and to make it difficult for others to do the wrong thing. Others may encourage you to embrace a “slightly” unethical solution as the easiest or most convenient method. Do not ease the way for others to do wrong; stand up for your beliefs and what you know is right. Do not compromise your professional ethic or your individual values and moral principles. If you believe you are right after sober and considered judgment, hold your position.

Candor is being frank, open, honest, and sincere with your soldiers, seniors, and peers. It is an expression of personal integrity. If handled properly, disagreeing with others and presenting your point of view are not wrong. Remember these three important points: (1) select the right time and place to offer your criticism or advice; (2) do not criticize a plan without giving a constructive alternative; (3) recognize that when your leader has made the final decision, you must end your discussion and support legal and proper orders even if you do not personally agree with them. There is often no time in combat to verify reports or to question the accuracy of information. Consequences are too important, and time is too short to communicate anything but the truth. Candor is equally important in peacetime. Demand it from your subordinates and expect it from your peers and superiors. Candor expresses personal integrity.

The beliefs of a leader impact directly on the leadership climate, cohesion, discipline, training, and combat effectiveness of a unit.
Competence is proficiency in required professional knowledge, judgment, and skills. Each leader must have it to train and to develop a cohesive, disciplined unit with all the required individual and collective skills to win on the battlefield. Competence builds confidence in one’s self and one’s unit; both are crucial elements of morale, courage, and, ultimately, success on the battlefield.

Commitment means the dedication to carry out all unit missions and to serve the values of the country, the Army, and the unit. This is shown by doing your best to contribute to the Army, to train and develop your unit, and to help your soldiers develop professionally and personally.

Norms

Norms are the rules or laws normally based on agreed-upon beliefs and values that members of a group follow to live in harmony. Norms can fall into one of two categories.

Formal norms are official standards or laws that govern behavior. Traffic signals, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and the Geneva Conventions are formal norms that direct the behavior of American soldiers. They dictate what actions are required or forbidden. Uniform regulations, safety codes, and unit SOPs are also formal norms.

Informal norms are unwritten rules or standards that govern the behavior of group members. In the Korean Combat Patrol account, Lieutenant Chandler stressed the informal norm that casualties were never left by the rest of the patrol. At the root of this norm was a shared value about the importance of caring for each other. The soldiers found comfort in knowing they would be cared for if they became casualties.

Importance of Beliefs, Values, and Norms

Beliefs, values, and norms guide the actions of individuals and groups. They are like a traffic control system; they are signals giving direction, meaning, and purpose to our lives.

Examples abound of soldiers throughout history who sacrificed their lives to save friends or help their unit accomplish a mission. These brave, selfless actions include blocking exploding grenades, personally taking out enemy fighting positions, and manning key positions to protect a withdrawal. Beliefs and values motivate this kind of heroic self-sacrifice. The motivating force may be the soldier’s belief in the importance of retaining his personal honor, of saving a buddy, of helping the unit, of serving a cause, or a combination of these.

Your soldiers will fight for you if they believe that the best chance for survival for themselves and their buddies is to do their job as part of a team. They will be more effective if they believe in themselves, in the unit, in you, and in the cause they are fighting for.

Individual values, beliefs, and attitudes are shaped by past experiences involving such things as family, school, work, and social relationships. Leaders must understand the importance of nurturing and shaping beliefs and values in their subordinates because they are fundamental motivating factors.

Influencing Beliefs, Values, and Norms

As a leader, you have the power to influence the beliefs and values of your soldiers by setting the example; by recognizing behavior that supports professional beliefs, values, and norms; and by planning, executing, and assessing tough, realistic individual and collective training.

Tough training does not mean training in which leaders haze or yell at troops in an effort to cause artificial stress. This merely creates an antagonistic atmosphere of “us against them.” This kind of leadership does not succeed in combat, so why practice bad habits. Tough training occurs when leaders and soldiers mutually experience realistic, exhausting conditions that prepare both, as a team, for the stress of combat.

Captain Herren, B Company commander, was concerned about the operation in the Ia Drang Valley because his men had gone without sleep the night before while performing another mission. He could only trust that the training his unit had received would enable them to overcome the lack of rest and that their fatigue would have little effect on their fighting ability. Training that simulates such conditions is tough.

During a field exercise, you could plan for an all-night road march, a few hours rest, then a simulated battle that is demanding on leaders
and soldiers. This kind of training builds cohesion—positive respect and trust among soldiers and between leaders and soldiers. It builds a feeling of shared hardships and teamwork. It contributes to the respect and comradeship that help you influence beliefs and values of soldiers.

Tough training conducted to standards will teach your soldiers to do things as individuals and as a team that they did not believe possible. It will give your soldiers confidence in themselves, in each other, and in you. If properly explained, it will help each soldier understand the linkage and the importance of his ability to perform individual tasks properly in support of the unit’s collective mission.

As a leader, you must respect your soldiers and must earn their respect if you are to influence their beliefs and values. Subordinates will always respect your rank, but they will base their genuine respect on your demonstrated character, knowledge, and professional skills.

Once your soldiers respect you and want your approval, you can guide them to demonstrate unselfish concern for the unit and for other soldiers. They will become concerned with excellence in everything that relates to combat readiness if this is the value you demonstrate. If your soldiers respect and admire you, they want to be like you, and they naturally tend to adopt your professional beliefs and values as their own. You can reinforce this behavior with positive feedback and by praising them for things they do that support duty, cohesiveness, discipline, good training, and good maintenance. Praise, however, can be cheapened, either by overuse or when it is not sincere.

**CHARACTER**

Character describes a person’s inner strength and is the link between values and behaviors. A soldier of character does what he believes right, regardless of the danger or circumstances. A soldier’s behavior shows his character. In tough situations, leadership takes self-discipline, determination, initiative, compassion, and courage.

There is no simple formula for success in all the situations you may face. The key is to remain flexible and attempt to gather as many facts as the circumstances will allow before you must make a decision. When dealing with others, every situation has two sides; listen to both. The way you handle problems depends on the interaction of the factors of leadership (the leader, the leader, the situation, and communications).

Character can be strong or weak. A person with strong character recognizes what he wants and has the drive, energy, self-discipline, willpower, and courage to get it. A person with weak character does not know what is needed and lacks purpose, willpower, self-discipline, and courage.

A person who can admit when he is wrong is exhibiting strong character. Some believe that apologizing is a sign of weakness and causes a leader to lose power. Quite the contrary, admitting when you have made a mistake takes humility and moral courage. We are all human and make mistakes. Although placing blame on someone or something else when a mistake is made may be tempting, it indicates weak character, which your soldiers will readily recognize.

We need leaders of strong and honorable character who support the values of loyalty to the nation, the Army, and the unit; duty; selfless service; and integrity. In this manual a soldier of character means a person with strong and honorable character.

**Importance of Character**

Your soldiers assess your character as they watch your day-to-day actions. They know if you are open and honest with them. They see whether you are indecisive, lazy, or selfish. They will quickly determine whether you know and enforce the Army standards. Your soldiers’ perceptions of your actions combine to form a continuing assessment of your character.

Future wars will be won by leaders with strong and honorable character. When mentally preparing for the stress of combat, it is good to know that ordinary people in past wars have shown that kind of character. An inspiring example of such a soldier follows.
Alvin C. York was born to a poor family in the mountains of Tennessee. As a youth, York was known as a wild hellraiser with a particular hankering for alcohol, fighting, and gambling until he fell in love with a church-going girl who refused to date him unless he changed his ways. He started reading the Bible and adopted its fundamental teachings as his values. He changed his beliefs, values, and behavior and even became a respected leader in his church.

When he was 30, World War I broke out. He was inducted into the Army and assigned to Captain Danforth's Company G, 328th Infantry Regiment, at Camp Gordon, Georgia. York told Danforth that he would do his duty, but that he did not want to fight and did not believe in killing enemy soldiers. Captain Danforth was troubled by York's beliefs and feelings. As training progressed, he could see that York was potentially the best soldier in the company. York's mountain life had made him a tough, hard-muscled, clear-thinking man. His body and mind were conditioned by years of hunting, plowing, and blacksmithing. He had been an expert shot since boyhood. Captain Danforth would have made York a sergeant except for his reservations about killing.

Captain Danforth tried to convince York that killing enemy soldiers in a just war is not against the Word of God. York wouldn't budge. Captain Danforth then discussed York with the battalion commander, Major Buxton, a deeply religious man who knew the Bible as well as York. After talking to York, Major Buxton sent him home on leave. "To York he said, 'That will give you time to do some thinking and praying. If you can then find it in your heart to return with a free conscience, we will take you with us. If you cannot...I will see that you are let out.'"1

York went home for two weeks. Finally, on the last day of his leave, after searching the deepest regions of his mind and soul, he decided that for him, the highest moral good was to go to war with Company G.

"He rejoined his company and told Captain Danforth that he had become convinced that he could fight for his country without violating the precepts of his faith. From that day on York marched in the ranks with a light heart and clear mind."2 York changed his own belief about the "moral rightness" of war. Respected leaders can influence the beliefs, values, and character of subordinates.

York's decision had great consequences when he accomplished an almost unbelievable exploit that displayed his courage and initiative.

"The essence of Alvin York's life was compressed into four hours of October 8, 1918, in the mud and blood of the Argonne Forest [in France]. . . . At 6:10 a.m., York's Company was ordered to . . . seize a German-held rail point. Hidden in woods overlooking a valley, a German machine-gun battalion opened up on the company, killed most of its forward ranks."3

"York, the only surviving noncom, was left in command. He called for the others to move forward. They advanced and succeeded in overcoming the first machine gun nest and taking its crew prisoner. York told someone to see to getting the prisoners to the rear; then he moved out in advance of his tiny command to see what lay ahead of them. He had gone forward only a few yards when a line of 35 machine guns opened up and pinned him down.

"The Tennessean found himself trapped and under fire within 25 yards of the enemy's machine gun pits. . . . He began firing into the nearest enemy position, aware that the Germans would have to expose themselves to get an aimed shot at him. And every time a German head showed over the parapet, York drilled a bullet into it!"

"After he had shot down more than a dozen enemy gunners in this fashion, he was charged by six German soldiers who came at him with fixed bayonets."

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1Bruce Jacobs, Heroes of the Army, p 67.
2Jacobs, p 67.
Sergeant York showed clear thinking and coolness under pressure.

"York... drew a bead on the sixth man, and then on the fifth. He worked his way down the line, and practically before he knew it, the first man in line was charging the eagle-eyed American sharpshooter all by himself. York dropped him with a dead-center shot.

"York again turned his attention on the machine gun pits. Every time he fired, another enemy soldier fell... In between shots York called for the Germans to surrender. At first it may have seemed funny to the well-entrenched enemy; but the joke had become rather hollow by the time the Tennessean had killed his twenty-second victim. Shortly afterward a German officer advanced under a white flag and offered to surrender if York would stop shooting at his men.

"York demanded—and received!—the surrender of the remaining Germans. Having taken a total of 132 prisoners, and knocked 35 machine guns out of action, York finally returned to his regiment's lines. He left the prisoners... and headed back to his own outfit.

"Intelligence officers questioned the prisoners and learned from their testimony the incredible story of how a fighting battalion was destroyed by one determined soldier armed only with a rifle and pistol.

"What's more, it was learned that York had destroyed this battalion at a moment when it was supposed to support a German counterattack against the Americans."4 His strong and honorable character enabled him to destroy the morale and effectiveness of an entire enemy machine gun battalion.

*Jacobs, pp 68-71.
If we go to war again, many of our soldiers and units may find themselves in situations similar to York’s. How will they behave? Will they rise to the occasion as York did? Will they have the necessary character and skills? The answers to these questions will depend on whether leaders have developed in their soldiers the required beliefs, values, character, knowledge, and skills.

Today’s soldiers have as much potential as Sergeant York did. They too can serve courageously under stressful circumstances if they are trained and led properly. Base your training program on building the motivation, confidence, and competence your subordinates will need on the battlefield.

Character Building

Building character demands the honesty to determine your own character weaknesses. Have you demonstrated the self-discipline and will on which strong and honorable character is based? How have you handled the tough situations? Sometimes you are the best judge of your strengths and weaknesses. Other times you may have blind spots that keep you from seeing your own weaknesses.

You must be open to feedback and advice. However, you must take the responsibility for continually building and strengthening your character. Others can help, but they cannot do it for you. To build strong and honorable character, you should—

• Assess the present strength of your values and character.
• Determine what values you want to promote.
• Seek out missions and situations that support developing such character.
• Select a role model who demonstrates the values and character you are trying to develop.

You build strong and honorable character by hard work, study, and challenging experiences. You must develop habits that force you to continually develop your mind and character. The better you understand yourself, the easier it is to exercise your will and self-discipline, and the more you strengthen your character.

The character you want to instill in your soldiers, and should attempt to exhibit in the daily example you set, should be consistent with the values of courage, candor, competence, and commitment. For this reason, leading and training soldiers well must begin with their induction into the service. When they begin their Army training, individuals are prepared for change, and since most want to do well, they are willing to adopt the stressed Army values. All leaders need a good program for integrating new soldiers into their unit. As a leader, you must teach and demonstrate the right values and norms of working, training, and living.

Changing Character of Problem Soldiers

How much can you change the character of a problem soldier? What if a soldier comes from an environment where the parents themselves set a bad example or the soldier received little education? What about a soldier from a neighborhood where accepted conduct is lying and stealing. These norms became instilled as values while he was growing up. Lying to authority. “getting over,” “shamming,” and taking advantage of “the system” are normal behavior to this soldier. He is dependable and irresponsible; he lacks self-discipline. Can this soldier change? What is your responsibility to this soldier?

You must understand human nature. There is good and bad in everyone. A leader must bring out the good in each soldier. You may be able to eliminate counterproductive beliefs, values, and behaviors and help a soldier develop character if he wants to change. Many soldiers want to improve, but they need discipline, organization, a good role model, and a positive set of beliefs, values, and habits to pattern themselves after. You, as a leader, must both demonstrate by example and assist in establishing the conditions for that individual which will encourage the change.

You will not be able to influence the beliefs, values, and character of all your soldiers, but you can influence most soldiers. Your job is to make good soldiers out of all the people in your unit, even the problem soldiers.

Gaining the respect of soldiers is important. A respected leader influences soldiers by teaching, coaching, counseling, training, disciplining, and setting a good example. If a soldier does not adopt soldierly values and behavior after you and the rest of the chain of command have done your best, eliminate him from the Army so that he cannot disrupt discipline and cohesion in your unit. Respected and successful leaders create a leadership climate that causes most
soldiers to develop the right professional values and character. Leaders can often change soldiers’ motivation from self-interest to selfless service to their unit and nation.

You have another major responsibility in developing character. You must give your soldiers confidence that they can develop their character. Convince your soldiers that you are on their side, helping them. Their belief that you sincerely care about them and want them to develop the correct values and behavior (because that is right for them) helps give them confidence to become able soldiers with strong and honorable character.

THE PROFESSIONAL ARMY ETHIC

The doctrinal statement of the professional Army ethic is in FM 100-1. The ethic sets the moral context for service to the nation and inspires the sense of purpose necessary to preserve the nation, even by using military force. From the ideals of the Constitution to the harsh realities of the battlefield, the four elements of the professional Army ethic contain the values that guide the way you must lead.

Loyalty to the Nation, the Army, and the Unit

The oath every soldier takes requires loyalty to the nation and involves an obligation to support and defend the Constitution. Loyalty to the Army means supporting the military and civilian chain of command. Loyalty to unit expresses both the obligation between those who lead and the led and the shared commitment among soldiers for one another.

American military professionals do not fight to force our political system on others or to gain power or wealth. Professional soldiers are protectors of the ideals of America, willing to fight for these ideals so that others can live in a free and just society. To do this, they must be experts at leading soldiers in battle. The military leader who deeply values loyalty to the nation sees himself as a person who will always do his best to defend American ideals.

Your unit is your piece of the Army’s action, your day-to-day part of the Army. By contributing to your unit’s mission and combat readiness, you contribute to the defense of the nation. The unit is your family, your team. Loyalty to the unit means that you place the unit’s needs and goals ahead of your own.

Lieutenant Herrick demonstrated his total dedication and loyalty to his nation, Army, and unit as he continued to direct his perimeter defense in the Ia Drang Valley until he died of his wounds. Similarly, Staff Sergeant Savage, in this same engagement, continued to place his soldiers’ needs ahead of his personal safety as he called in supporting fires and directed the perimeter defense until friendly relief was able to link up.

Duty

A duty is a legal or moral obligation to do what should be done without being told to do it. Duty means accomplishing all assigned tasks to the fullest of your ability.

Duty requires willingness to accept full responsibility for your actions and for your soldiers’ performance. It also requires a leader to take the initiative and anticipate requirements based on the situation. Captain Fincher superbly demonstrated these qualities when he alerted his platoons in anticipation of a new mission and provided timely guidance on actions to be taken. As a professional, your responsibility is to do your duty to the best of your ability.

If you lie or tell a half-truth to make your unit look good, you may think you are doing your duty and being loyal to your leader and unit. In fact, you are being dishonorable and unethical, neglecting your duty to the Army and the nation. A leader cannot truly do his duty without being honorable.

Selfless Service

You may have to put the nation’s welfare and mission accomplishment ahead of the personal safety of you and your troops. You must resist the temptation to put self-gain, personal advantage, and self-interests ahead of what is
best for the nation, the Army, or your unit. Selfless service is necessary to develop teamwork, and military service demands the willingness to sacrifice.

As a leader, you must be the greatest servant in your unit. Your rank and position are not personal rewards, You earn them so that you can serve your subordinates, your unit, and your nation.

Lieutenant Chandler and the men selected for the combat patrol in Korea recognized the inherent dangers in the mission they were about to undertake. His soldiers were ready to be led into combat by him because he had earned their confidence in earlier actions. He prepared a detailed plan, ensured the tasks were understood, and personally supervised preparation. Throughout the conduct of the patrol, he put the mission and welfare of his soldiers ahead of his personal safety.

**Integrity**

Integrity is woven through the fabric of the professional Army ethic. It means being honest and upright, avoiding deception, and living the values you suggest for your subordinates. Integrity demands that you act according to the other values of the Army ethic. You must be absolutely sincere, honest, and candid and avoid deceptive behavior. Integrity is the basis for the trust and confidence that must exist among members of the Army. Further, you must demonstrate integrity in your personal life. If you compromise your personal integrity, you break the bonds of trust between you, your soldiers, and your leaders.

**ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ethics are principles or standards that guide professionals to do the moral or right thing—what ought to be done.

As a leader, you have three general ethical responsibilities. First, you must be a good role model. Second, you must develop your subordinates ethically. Finally, you must lead in such a way that you avoid putting your subordinates into ethical dilemmas.

**Be A Role Model**

Whether you like it or not, you are on display at all times. Your actions say much more than your words. Subordinates will watch you carefully and imitate your behavior. You must accept the obligation to be a worthy role model and you cannot ignore the effect your behavior has on others. You must be willing to do what you require of your soldiers and share the dangers and hardships.

Colonel Chamberlain was a respected role model who inspired his soldiers. His selflessness, kindness, compassion, and respect for others were evident in the way he led.

**Develop Your Subordinates Ethically**

You must shape the values and beliefs of your soldiers to support the values of the nation, the Army, and the unit. You develop your subordinates by personal contact and by teaching them how to reason clearly about ethical matters. You need to be honest with them and talk through possible solutions to difficult problems. When you make a decision that has an ethical component, share your thought process with your subordinates when time permits. They will respect you for caring enough to discuss your personal thoughts with them, and they will learn from you. Being sensitive to the ethical elements of soldiering is a big part of developing your soldiers.

Your goal is to develop a shared ethical perspective so that your soldiers will act properly in the confusion and uncertainty of combat. Unless they have learned how to think clearly through ethical situations, they may not have the moral strength to do what is right.

**Avoid Creating Ethical Dilemmas for Your Subordinates**

Since your soldiers will want to please you, do not ask them to do things that will cause them to behave unethically to please you. Here are some examples that can get you in trouble:

- I don’t care how you get it done—just do it!
- There is no excuse for failure!
- Can do!
- Zero Defects.
- Covering up errors to look good.
- Telling superiors what they want to hear.
- Making reports say what your leader wants to see.
- Setting goals that are impossible to reach (missions without resources),
- Loyalty up—not down.
These examples may seem as though they would never be a problem for you. Do not assume this is true for others. Learn to give orders and lead without creating these kinds of dilemmas for your soldiers.

**AN ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Regardless of the source of pressure to act unethically, you usually know in your heart the right thing to do. The real question is whether you have the character to live by sound professional values when under pressure. If you have the right beliefs and values, the thing to do in most situations will be clear and you will do it. Sometimes you will find yourself in complex situations where the right ethical choice is unclear. True ethical dilemmas exist when two or more deeply held values collide. In such situations, using a decision-making process can help you identify the course of action that will result in the greatest moral good.

**NOTE**

The Geneva Conventions prohibit captors from using enemy prisoners of war or civilians under military control as hostages. You must not violate this prohibition even though doing so might ensure the immediate safety of yourself and your troops or ease accomplishing your mission. By signing and ratifying the Geneva Conventions, the United States declared that it is never acceptable to hold a hostage, regardless of what may happen as a result.

Following are the steps of an ethical decision-making process to help you think through ethical dilemmas:

Step 1. Interpret the situation. What is the ethical dilemma?

Step 2. Analyze all the factors and forces that relate to the dilemma.

Step 3. Choose the course of action you believe will best serve the nation.

Step 4. Implement the course of action you have chosen.
The ethical decision-making process starts when you confront a problem and continues until you develop and implement a solution. The process helps you analyze the problem, identify influencing forces, develop possible courses of action, assess them, and decide on a course of action.

**Forces that Influence Decision Making**

A variety of forces influence the ethical decision-making process. The factors and forces you should consider will depend on the dilemma. Here are some probable ones:

- **Laws, orders, and regulations**—formal standards contained in laws, policies, regulations, and legal and proper orders that guide behavior and decision making.
- **Basic national values**—values established in documents, such as the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, and in traditions that provide the foundation for required behavior of all Americans.
- **Traditional Army values**—values the Army establishes as standards of required behavior for all soldiers. They are loyalty to the nation, the Army, and the unit; duty; selfless service; integrity; courage; competence; candor; and commitment.
- **Unit operating values**—values actually functioning in your unit that produce the standards governing day-to-day behavior. Unit operating values are often the same as traditional Army values. There are times, however, when they are not. Consider situations involving careerism, altered training and maintenance records, equipment borrowed from another unit for an inspection, or “eyewash” instead of truth.
- **Your values**—your ideas and beliefs that influence your behavior.
- **Institutional pressures**—elements of Army policies, procedures, and operations, and other aspects which influence your behavior.

These six forces may not be the only important forces that you should identify and consider. Since ethics is a part of leadership, your decision-making process should also consider the four factors of leadership (the led, the leader, the situation, and communications).

The ethical decision-making process can help you think through an ethical dilemma and arrive at a course of action. Once you have analyzed all the factors and forces involved, look at the values in conflict and determine the course of action that seems best for the nation.

**Complex Ethical Dilemmas**

It may seem that the ethical decision-making process is too mechanical. You may think you do not need it if you have strong will and moral courage. Normally, the “right” alternative is clear. The ethical decision-making process is for the complex dilemmas that haunt leaders when no clear best choice is evident. Here is an example of one leader’s ethical dilemma in combat.

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**Ethical Dilemma in Combat**

Not long after I was commissioned, I found myself in a combat unit in Vietnam. I also found that combat generated many ethical dilemmas. Applying the guidelines for conduct as I understood them often did not produce obviously “right” answers.

The infantry company I commanded was participating in patrolling operations as part of an antiguerrilla patrol campaign. We operated in an area that small guerrilla raiding forces had been moving through for some time. Our daily patrolling routine went on for about six weeks. Casualties in the company were high. Most casualties occurred in one sector within our patrol area designated as Bravo 7. Every time our patrols moved into the sector, they were ambushed or encountered booby traps. Because of other mission requirements, I could not leave a force permanently in Bravo 7. I talked to the village chief in the small village located in Bravo 7, but he was trying to remain neutral. He hoped to accommodate us and the VC. Although he would not help us, I was sure he and the villagers knew where every booby trap in the area was located. Every time our patrols went into Bravo 7, soldiers were killed or injured. The resulting morale problem was so severe that I started going on the patrols myself. One night a booby trap...
trap exploded, killing two men and wounding a third, even though we had taken extensive precautions in our approach to the area. We were unable to locate enemy soldiers or VC in Bravo 7, yet time after time we were ordered to continue sending the patrols. The mission did not seem to justify the casualties we were receiving. I had a serious problem. I appealed to my battalion commander, but he stressed accomplishing our security mission and following orders.

What should I do? The continued loss of soldiers for no apparent gain seemed intolerable. I could have reported sending the patrols out and sent none, but I could not accept that alternative. Simply lying to my superiors would have been discovered soon in any case. Restrictions on the use of artillery eliminated the idea of destroying the booby traps by thoroughly bombarding the area. After trying to sort it all out, it seemed to me that I had only two choices. I could either refuse to obey orders or continue sending men to death and injury for no understandable purpose. If I disobeyed orders, I knew I would be replaced and my successor would have to face the same problem.

Other possibilities existed, of course. We could have forced villagers to lead patrols into the area although it was against law. No civilian casualties occurred from booby traps, indicating they knew the booby trap areas. We could have put pressure on the Bravo 7 villagers and forced them to give us information about the location of booby traps. My military background, with its emphasis on completing the mission despite obstacles, prompted me to consider such alternatives. As it turned out, events made my final choice unnecessary. We were shifted many miles to the west in a big operation on the Cambodian border and never returned to Bravo 7. I still wonder what I would have done if I had stayed. No logic or training I had received gave me a clear right answer. Obedience to legal orders demanded one course. Responsibility to my soldiers appeared to demand another.

A leader must analyze the problem, before deciding a course of action.
This situation was a true ethical dilemma for this leader. He felt bound to be loyal to both his leaders and his followers. There is no “right” answer or “school solution” to this situation. Different leaders would come to different conclusions after analyzing all the factors and forces that relate to the situation. The important point is that using the ethical decision-making process can help you identify all the options and then eliminate ones that will not serve the nation well. If you ever find yourself in an ethical dilemma, think through the ethical decision-making process and the concept of the highest moral good.

Tough leadership decisions do not always have happy endings. Some may praise your decision while others find fault with your logic. You may not always be rewarded for integrity and candor. The point is that you have to live with yourself. Before you can gain the respect of others, you must respect yourself. You gain honor and keep it by doing your duty in an ethical way, having the character to act by the professional Army ethic.

**SUMMARY**

Your ability to lead flows from your individual beliefs, values, and character. Your ability to inspire soldiers to do the brave and right thing—things they may not think they are capable of performing—is influenced by the example you set.

Beliefs, values, and norms have great motivating power. Respected leaders of strong and honorable character are able to influence the beliefs, values, and norms of their soldiers. As a professional, you are sworn to use your power for the good of the country, the Army, and those you lead.

The professional Army ethic contains the values that guide the way leaders should carry out their professional responsibilities. The elements of the professional Army ethic are loyalty to the nation, the Army, and the unit; duty; selfless service; and integrity.

As a leader, you have ethical responsibilities. You must be a worthy role model, develop subordinates ethically, and avoid creating ethical dilemmas for subordinates.

When faced with a situation where the right ethical choice is unclear, consider all the forces and factors that relate to the situation and then select a course of action that best serves the ideals of the nation. The ethical decision-making process is a way to resolve those dilemmas.

Fundamental to what leaders must BE are the moral strength and courage necessary to make hard decisions and to give soldiers the will to fight and the ability to win.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a Leader, You Must:</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be a person of strong and honorable character.</td>
<td>- Determination.</td>
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<td>- Compassion.</td>
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<td>- Self-discipline.</td>
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<td>- Role Modeling.</td>
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<td>- Initiative.</td>
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<td>- Flexibility.</td>
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<td>- Consistency.</td>
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<td>Be committed to the professional Army ethic.</td>
<td>- Loyalty to the nation, the Army, and the unit.</td>
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<td>- Selfless service.</td>
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<td>- Integrity.</td>
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<td>- Duty.</td>
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<td>Be an example of individual values.</td>
<td>- Courage.</td>
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<td>- Competence.</td>
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<td>- Commitment.</td>
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<td>Be able to resolve complex ethical dilemmas.</td>
<td>- Interpret the situation.</td>
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<td>- Analyze all the factors and forces that apply.</td>
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<td>- Choose a course of action that seems best for the nation.</td>
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