

# Serving as an Army Civilian



## CASE STUDY VIDEO VIGNETTE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

For all members of the Army Profession

<http://cape.army.mil>

# Serving as an Army Professional

## Table of Contents

1: Basic Concepts .....	p. 2
2: Facilitation: Best Practices .....	p. 2
3: Video Transcript .....	p. 3-7
4: Additional Resources.....	p. 8
5: Sample Discussion Questions.....	p. 9-12
6: AAR/Check on Learning.....	p. 13

## BASIC CONCEPTS

- Watch the video and read the transcript prior to discussion.
- Review “Facilitation Best Practices.”
- See “Additional Resources” for more content.
- Think about a personal experience, story, or event which relates to the scenario and consider using this as a way to start the discussion.
- Present each part of the vignette and lead an open discussion which relates to desired learning outcomes. Listed below are “Sample Discussion Questions” to assist in facilitating the class.
- After watching and discussing each part of the story, identify the takeaways and discuss how each participant will apply this experience.

## FACILITATION: BEST PRACTICES

The facilitator’s main role is to be a catalyst for conversation and learning about the topic at-hand. This video case study contains several rounds of discussion and ends with time to reflect on personal stories and vignettes that relate to the video.

Here are some key points to consider when preparing to facilitate a discussion:

- Let participants do most of the talking.
- The facilitator’s key role is to ask questions which spark thought and conversation.
- Ensure you engage everyone within your group and set the conditions for them to share thoughts openly. Do not let any one person or group of people dominate the conversation. Ask questions/opinions of the “quiet ones” to bring them into the group discussion.
- Have questions prepared for each round to drive the conversation. Ask open-ended questions and encourage participants to elaborate on their answers/thoughts.

**You are the catalyst for conversation. Make sure you continue to ask questions that make your group dig deeper.** For more information and guidelines on facilitating professional development discussions, visit the CAPE Website at <http://cape.army.mil>.

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

### Serving Honorably

Thirty-two years of service to our Army and to our nation. I remember taking my oath. I remember going to the Pentagon to this little personnel office and raising my hand and thinking wow, I'm really signing up for this; I'm sort of joining. It's not like I'm taking a job you think you're going to go out and work for a company and you go into your first day and you start doing your work. I pledged that I would do my best and I pledged that I would do my best for our nation. It's pretty-- I think it's pretty cool <laughs> that for all these years I've worked for our nation, and you look around and lots of my peers have done great things for their company but I've helped my nation and I think it's just-- the oath is an important start. I don't think many understand that Civilians take the same oath or a very similar oath to our commissioned officers, and one of the things that we're trying to do with the Army Acculturation Initiative is actually make that an event, have a senior executive or a Senior General Officer or Commander go in and give that oath to those new Cs, make it special. We want them to join our Profession. We want them to know that we value that pledge or that promise that they're making to our nation and what they're going to contribute to our Army so the oath is very important. Even today, I think back on that.

### The Army Civilian Corps

"Three hundred thousand people working for our Army in a Civilian capacity. I don't think people understand how big

that is, five hundred and forty different career fields, thirty-one different career programs doing a myriad of functions from the GS-2 level to the executive level, to our Secretary of the Army who is a Civilian appointed by the President.

I think there are a myriad of functions that the Army Civilian performs to support our Profession of Arms. If you want to put your children in childcare so you can go out and train, you can prepare to deploy, if you need the ammunition so that you can train, if you need access to ranges so you can execute your training, if you need role players when you're out at the NTC, if you need people to write policy to ensure that you're paid appropriately, that you're equipped appropriately, that you have the right facilities, Civilians are going to provide that for you, that expertise, that continuity and that leadership to ensure that our Profession is effective.

There is a diversity of thought that comes from having people that maybe grew up differently, didn't grow up in the Army, maybe have been in the private sector, have been to different kind of academic institutes, and bringing their ideas and their innovation to the complex problems the Army faces make the Civilian cohort a very important part of our Army.

Since 2001 and this-- these current conflicts, the Army has asked our Civilians to step up and they have done a remarkable job. They've worked hard; they've deployed; they've worked longer hours; they've taken on new missions; they've assumed new roles; they've gone back to learn more things; they've deployed into theatres where we previously haven't been. They have been forward deploys into

combat areas. Think about our logistic support or think about the ammunition support, our human terrain teams, and mobile training teams. They're out there with our soldiers making sure they're equipped and ready to handle those extraordinary missions that they have to handle as part of the Profession of Arms.

## **Serving as an Army Professional**

It is critical that Army Civilians are part of the Profession. This is part of building trust with our military cohorts. They need to have confidence that we understand the ethics, values, and history of our Army, that we understand the missions and the objectives that our Army has and how important their roles are to ensuring that our Army can accomplish their missions. So I think that what being part of the Profession means is setting some standards, understanding that I am-- I have the competence to serve, I have the character to serve, and I am committed to the Army.

## **Certification of Army Professionals – Competence, Character, and Commitment**

First of all, an individual is selected for a position; that is a standard. The standard is the job they're selected for and it is the criteria that is used to evaluate that person when you select them. So somebody comes in with standards, they meet the standards of the job, but how do I ensure they meet the standards of the job after I've hired them? We do that through many ways. We do that through counseling. We do it through a performance management

system which says "I'm going to set objectives to you, you're going to meet them over time or not meet them over time, I'm going to give you feedback, and then annually I'm going to evaluate you and you're going to know where you stand. Know your strengths, know your weakness, and oh, by the way I'm going to invest in you. I'm going to educate you, train you, and give you different opportunities to grow your competencies. Through that we can have confidence and we can certify that somebody is able to do their job, they're qualified to do that job, they have the competence to do that job, and they do it in the right manner; they do it ethically and they do it with character.

## **Trust**

Well, trust is important I think in any organization whether it's your family, whether it's your church or whether it's your work or whether it's our Army. You have to have faith and confidence that people are going to do the right thing and it's not just say the right thing that they're actually going to apply those ethical principles; they're going to live the Army values. So whether I'm a Civilian or a military I am going to be loyal to our nation. I'm going to make sure that my actions are honest, they're fair, they're aligned with integrity, that I wouldn't do anything inappropriate, but I think it goes back to maybe something we talked about earlier is how do we make sure that our military cohort really understands our Civilian cohort. Again, a captain understands what a sergeant does, a sergeant understands what a captain does, their experience, their education, do they really understand what

the Civilian workforce is, and yes, we're very diverse and yes, we all have different backgrounds but to be a GS-13 branch chief there is experience, there's talent that comes with that. So how I do ensure that there is good common understanding because trust in our Profession should be implicit but it doesn't mean that we don't need to grow it and strengthen it and strengthen that cohesive fiber or fabric of our Army, and I think by doing that and by understanding what our military, our Civilian bring to the problem set and making sure that we act ethically. I mean I think that is something-- making an ethical decision I think helps build trust, demonstrating your loyalty builds trust, so I think that's something we do in our personal relationships and it's something we need to do in our Professional relationships.

### **Positive Work Environment**

Every person who comes to work should be able to thrive in this Profession. They should be treated with respect, they should work in an environment that is fair, they should know that their bosses, their peers and their subordinates have integrity and are going to do the right thing, they should be able to trust those around you, and I think that Civilians just like our military cohort should be able to flourish in that environment. They should know and have confidence that they're going to be treated right, their word has value, and their deeds have value to the Army mission. So I just think that it is incumbent on all of us whether you're a leader or a worker or a commander to make sure that people can come to work, they can do their job, they

understand the importance of their job, they're given frank feedback on the good that they do and where they need to improve, that they're given opportunities to further develop their skills whether it's leader development or its technical training. I think that that's how we as a profession will thrive but it's also how our workforce as individuals within the Profession will thrive.

Army Civilians have an important role to ensure that we have a safe and sound environment for Army Soldiers, Army Civilians, and the Families of both. We do that through ensuring that we are disciplined and meet standards in our performance of duties whether we're working at the installation management command, the medical command, the Training and Doctrine Command. I think it is ensuring that we're acting ethically and if we're not acting ethically that we're self-regulating, if somebody else isn't acting ethically that we're engaging or intervening. I think that as I think about SHARP and the sexual harassment and sexual assault response program we have a requirement; we need to stand up. If we see something that makes us feel uncomfortable, we need to say something, if we see somebody acting inappropriately we need to say something, and I think that's part of how we can make sure that there is a safe and secure environment for our Army and our Profession.

### **Stewardship of the Army Profession**

How can Army Civilians demonstrate stewardship to the Army Profession? I think

we do that every day and I think that we do that by a couple means. One is to ensure that we effectively, efficiently, and ethically manage the resources in which we're entrusted and those resources are people, those resources are equipment and those resources are money. We have to ensure that we do that; that is stewardship. Army Civilians have lots of experience running policies, processes, systems. That's what our military asks us to do, those program budgeting systems, those equipping systems, those facilities management systems; that's what Civilians are doing for our Army. So I think that ensuring that they're running appropriately, ensuring that there are no material weaknesses that if there are gaps that we're fixing those gaps, that's what we do-- I mean that's what Civilians do for our Army.

## **Professional Development**

The Army is investing in our Army Civilians and they're doing that through a multipronged approach. We're doing that through ensuring that our Civilians are acculturated to our Army, a new program that TRADOC is leading for our Army. They're doing that by ensuring that the civilian education system provides educational needs that meet their requirements, that individual Civilian's requirements, investing in Civilians going off for a year or two, get a graduate degree or go off to the Army War College. Those are all ways that we're investing in leader development for Civilians but there are other ways. There are easy ways at the local level that we can do that, broadening somebody's competencies, giving them an opportunity to do a different job, giving

them an opportunity to serve at a different level whether it's on a permanent basis it's - or on a temporary basis. There's lots of ways to develop Civilians. Unfortunately or fortunately for me, I was a Civilian that did not get a lot of educational opportunities. Although an intern, I had two classes in my whole internship and the next time I went to school is when I became a senior executive, but it doesn't mean that I wasn't developed. For me the experiential learning and developmental assignments were the best way to kind of hone my skills, broaden my competencies and give me different levels of leadership experience. And so I think for every Civilian it's probably a little different and so the one size may not fit all but there's lots of opportunities out there and as leaders we have a responsibility to go out and figure out what works for our workforce and to help our military leaders understand how to apply all those civilian programs so they can also help their civilian workforce.

## **The Army Civilian Acculturation Program**

I am so excited about the Army Acculturation Initiative that-- the civilian workforce transformation under-- the undersecretary has taken on. This is an opportunity for us to acclimate civilians to our Army Profession, our culture, our history, what we value, our ethics, the stewardship and over about a year time to lay out events that must occur, education, training, experiential learning, performance counseling, performance evaluations so that in about a year's time you have been acculturated. You understand our Army, you can talk about our Army, hopefully

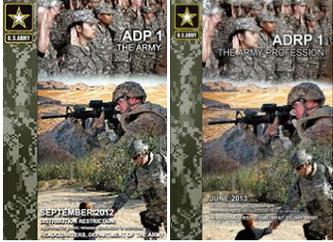
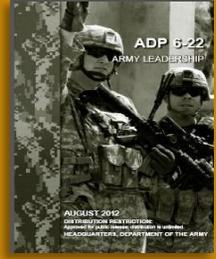
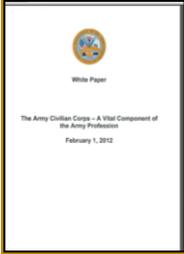
you've become an advocate for our Army and you want to stick with it like I did because when you come in you don't know; it's a job. We want it to be more than a job. We want it to be your career and your profession and we-- so it starts before the person is even brought on board. It starts when they're hired and getting them to understand what the Army's about and hopefully it's going to culminate with an event, a ceremony that says you've completed your first year, you've done everything we've asked you to do, we're happy you're part of us, but the other thing acculturation will do is make sure that those that support the system, whether it's our human resource professionals or it's our supervisors, understand what they need to do to acculturate a civilian to our force. And I think that what we'll see over the next year is pilots going on out there where we will be trying out tools, we'll be trying out maybe using the Army Career Tracker, which is a foundational document for training and education, to see if that can help us link the employees in and they have access to the tools they need in order to do this and the references. And we're really-- I think it's going to be a great thing for our Army; I think it will be a great thing for our leaders to have that tool to help them bring in our new force into our Profession.

## **Advice**

The advice I have for Department of Army Civilian leaders is probably similar to what I would tell any Civilian: Work hard. Our Army is going to be facing complex problems in the future and they're going to look to us to help them solve those problems. Continue to be creative and innovative. Look for new ways of doing work. Work hard. Be honest and forthright in your dealings. If you feel uncomfortable about something, speak up. If you see something that is-- it is not right, talk to somebody about it; don't wait for an issue to happen. I will tell every Army Civilian whether you're a leader or a new employee, "Have a plan. Develop your individual development plan. It doesn't matter if you have five years left or twenty-five years left working for our Army. Set some goals and objectives; work towards those goals and objectives." And probably lastly to the leaders is "Be coaches and mentors to others. Share that experience; share your expertise; share your leadership with others because they will learn and they will thrive because you have."

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are available:

	<p><b><u>Center for the Army Profession and Ethic:</u></b></p> <p>Visit the CAPE Website: <a href="http://cape.army.mil">http://cape.army.mil</a></p>
	<p><b><u>In Doctrine ADP 1 (The Army) &amp; ADRP 1 (The Army Profession):</u></b></p> <p><a href="http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/adp1.pdf">http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/adp1.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp1.pdf">http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp1.pdf</a></p>
	<p><b><u>In Doctrine ADP 6-22 (Army Leadership):</u></b></p> <p><a href="http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp622_new.pdf">http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp622_new.pdf</a></p>
	<p><b><u>White Paper. The Army Civilian Corps – A Vital Component of the Army Profession:</u></b></p> <p><a href="http://cape.army.mil/Info%20Papers/Army%20White%20Paper.pdf">http://cape.army.mil/Info%20Papers/Army%20White%20Paper.pdf</a></p>

## SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### “Serving Honorably”

[Watch “Serving Honorably” – 00:00 to 01:57]

1. What does Ms. Helmerson mean when she says, “wow, I’m really signing up for this, I’m sort of joining?” How did you feel when you took the oath of office? What did it mean to you?
2. Do you feel as Ms. Helmerson does that working for the Army helps our Nation?
3. In the Army Civilian Oath of Office it states, “I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter.” What does the term “office” mean to you in this context? How is it the same or different from the term “job”?

### “The Army Civilian Corps”

[Watch “The Army Civilian Corps” – 01:58 to 04:13]

1. How do you support the Profession of Arms in your position/organization?
2. What special skills or attributes do Army Civilians provide for the Profession?
3. The definition of the Army Profession is: A unique vocation of experts certified in the design, generation, support, and ethical application of landpower. How do you think Army Civilians support the Profession in the design, generation, and support of landpower?
4. Ms. Helmerson discusses diversity. How do you feel diversity within the Army Civilian Corps strengthens the organization and Army Profession?

### “Serving as an Army Professional”

[Watch “Serving as an Army Professional” – 04:14 to 04:56]

1. As a member of the Army Profession, why is it important that Army Civilians understand the history and culture of the U.S. Army?
2. How can you as an Army Professional ensure you, as well as others in your organization, have the competence to serve, the character to serve, and are committed to the Army? Why is this important?
3. How does seeing yourself as a Professional in an honored Profession affect how you conduct yourself in the performance of your duties and how you make decisions?

## **“Certification of Army Professionals – Competence, Character, and Commitment”**

**[Watch “Certification of Army Professionals – Competence, Character, and Commitment” – 04:57 to 06:00]**

1. How does your organization ensure Army Civilians meet the standards after they’ve been hired? What are some best practices used by your organization?
2. Why is it important to know your strengths and your weaknesses? How can this help you improve as an Army Professional?
3. Ms. Helmerson talks about investing in you with education, training, and growth opportunities. What can you do as an Army Professional to grow your competencies?

## **“Trust”**

**[Watch “Trust” – 06:01 to 07:49]**

1. Ms. Helmerson talks about “Living the Army Values.” Why is this important in the Army Civilian Corps?
2. Why is it important for our military counterparts to know how Army Civilians, as Professionals, contribute to the Army Profession? How would this increase trust between each of the cohorts?
3. Many Army leaders lead by example. Why is it important for these leaders to make ethical decisions each and every day they serve?

## **“Positive Work Environment”**

**[Watch “Positive Work Environment” – 07:50 to 10:04]**

1. General Odierno says that our units/organizations must promote an environment in which all members are able to reach their full potential. Why is this important? What are some ways to ensure your unit/organization fosters a positive work environment?
2. What actions should you take if your work environment is not positive? How can you improve the situation?
3. How do standards and discipline help contribute to a positive work environment? Why is it important to say something when you believe things are not right?

## **“Stewards of the Army Profession”**

**[Watch “Stewards of the Army Profession” – 10:05 to 10:56]**

1. How can Army Civilians demonstrate Stewardship of the Army Profession?
2. How can you, in your current position, make a difference with regard to effectively, efficiently, and ethically maintaining Army resources?

## **“Professional Development”**

**[Watch “Professional Development” – 10:57 to 12:40]**

1. What is your responsibility to develop yourself professionally?
2. What can your supervisor do to help you develop professionally?
3. People develop differently. What has been more important to your professional growth - education or experience? What can you do to obtain educational opportunities?

## **“Army Civilian Acculturation Program”**

**[Watch “Army Civilian Acculturation Program” – 12:41 to 14:46]**

1. The Army Civilian Acculturation Program is an opportunity to acclimate Civilians to the Army Profession. How do you see this program helping your organization and the Army?
2. What do you think needs to be included in this program to better prepare new employees for the Army Profession?

3. Do you use the Army Career Tracker? How can this tool help you reach your professional goals?

## **“Advice”**

**[Watch “Advice” – 14:47 to 15:53]**

1. Ms. Helmerson talks about working hard. Why is it important to have a good work ethic? How can this help you as a person and in your career field?
2. Ms. Helmerson says that you should speak up. Why is it important to take action when things are not right? Why is it important to not be a bystander?
3. Why is it important for leaders to be coaches and mentors? How can this relationship help both the leader and subordinate as well as the Army?

## AAR/CHECK ON LEARNING

### Personal Vignettes and Takeaways

*Facilitator asks students to share any personal vignettes and takeaways from the module.*

**It is important for the group to relate to this story on a personal level. Conclude the module emphasizing the significance of Ms. Helmerson's story. Army Civilians should walk away with a better understanding of the Army Civilian Corps, and be able to convey the importance of the Army Profession to others.**

**Upon concluding, the following questions are useful for determining learning and promoting reflection:**

<b>Learning</b>	Q – What did you learn from listening to the reactions and reflections of others?  Q – What are the future implications of this information and / or experience?
<b>Reflection</b>	Q – How do you feel / what do you think about what you learned?  Q – What will you do with your new information?  Q – How can you apply this experience to better develop yourself and your fellow professionals?