

“WHY AND HOW WE SERVE” LESSON HANDOUT
AMERICA’S ARMY – OUR PROFESSION (AAOP) “LIVING THE ARMY” ETHIC THEME

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DATE PREPARED: 30 AUGUST 2014

The Army Ethic: The Heart of the Army

The Army Ethic defines the moral principles that guide us in the conduct of our missions, performance of duty, and all aspects of life. Our Ethic is reflected in law, Army Values, creeds, oaths, ethos, and shared beliefs embedded within Army culture. It inspires and motivates all of us to make right decisions and to take right actions at all times.

The Army Ethic is the heart of our shared professional identity, our sense of who we are, our purpose in life, and *why* and *how* we serve the American people:

- *Why We Serve* – for our Soldiers, Army Civilians, our Families -- we are committed to do our duty to contribute to the “common defense;” we share a love of country and our Army Family; we defend American values that frame the nation as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States; and we serve “not to promote war, but to preserve peace.”
- *How We Serve* – as Army Professionals, we live by the Army Ethic in the conduct of our Mission, performance of our duty, and all aspects of our lives; and we practice the discipline of our military art and science, always striving for standards of excellence.

To violate the Army Ethic is to break our sacred bond of trust with each other and with those whom we serve. Failure to live by and uphold the Ethic brings dishonor on us all and may have strategic implications for the mission.

Army Professionals fulfill distinctive roles as honorable servants, military experts, and stewards of our profession. By our solemn oath, we voluntarily incur an extraordinary moral obligation inherent in the identity to which we aspire:

Trustworthy Army Professionals.

Honorable Servants of the Nation – Professionals of Character:

- By oath, we support and defend the Constitution, subordinate to civilian authority, and obey the laws of the Nation and the orders of those appointed over us; we reject and report illegal or immoral orders or actions.
- We take pride in honorably serving the Nation with integrity and demonstrating character in all aspects of our lives.
- We recognize the intrinsic dignity and worth of all people, treating them with respect and compassion.
- We demonstrate courage by setting the example for right conduct despite risk, uncertainty, and fear; and we candidly express our professional judgment to subordinates, peers, and superiors.

Military Experts – Competent Professionals:

- We commit ourselves to do our duty, with discipline and to standard, putting the needs of others above our own, and accomplish the mission as a team.
- We understand the mission may justly require taking the lives of others while courageously placing our own lives at risk.
- We continuously advance our expertise in the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our chosen profession, seeking the truth, and striving for excellence through life-long learning and professional development.

Stewards of the Army Profession – Committed Professionals:

- We uphold the standards of the profession and adhere to its values; we lead by example and hold ourselves and others accountable for decisions and actions.
- We apply discipline in our use of the resources entrusted to us by the American people; we ensure our Army is well-equipped, well-trained, and well-led; and we care for and develop Soldiers, Army Civilians, and Families.
- We develop and sustain *Esprit de Corps* and persevere, adapt, and overcome adversity, challenges, and setbacks.