

# Values and Standards of the British Army



ARMY

# Values and Standards

**Foreword by the Chief of The General Staff**

The British Army has a worldwide reputation for excellence, a strong reflection of its soldiers and officers. This reputation derives from, and depends upon, unequivocal commitment, self-sacrifice and mutual trust. Our Values and Standards are vital to operational effectiveness - they are the lifeblood that sustains the Army. They have to be more than just words, we must believe in them and live by them. Therefore, it is the effective and coherent translation of these Value and Standards into actions that must penetrate every command and organisation until they are instinctive.

Commanders create their command ethos and must ensure that Values and Standards are at the centre of it, through personal example and by educating and training their subordinates. The responsibility of commanders to be at the heart of this process cannot be delegated, and I hold you all accountable for it.

The Values are about character and spirit: the Standards define our actions and behaviour: I expect everyone in the Army to abide by these Values and Standards.

January 2008

General Sir Richard Dannatt  
Chief of the General Staff

# Values and Standards

## Introduction

- 1** The reputation of the British Army is extremely high. This tradition of excellence - and the public support it engenders - depends in large part on the operational effectiveness of the Army that results from the high standards of professionalism, individual behaviour and self-discipline of the British soldier, both on and off operations. These qualities cannot be taken for granted and are only possible if they are underpinned by a robust and clearly understood framework of Values and Standards. It requires all of us to understand and live by them; and for all commanders - from the most senior to the most junior - to show emphatic leadership.
- 2** Land operations are complex, dangerous and demanding - both physically and mentally. Soldiers have the responsibility and legal right to use lethal force, and may be required to lay down their own lives and risk those of their comrades. It is operational effectiveness that requires the Army to have values and standards that are different from society - 'need to be different' not right to be 'different'. However, the Army is not immune from changes in society, and this is reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of those who enlist. Therefore we must explain why our Values and Standards are more demanding of the individual; and why such demands are equally necessary on and off duty.
- 3** The Army's Values and Standards are not abstract concepts whose origins lie solely in the demands of battle. Values are the moral principles - the intangible character and spirit - that should guide and develop us into the sort of people we should be; whereas Standards are the authoritative yardsticks that define how we behave and on which we judge and measure that behaviour. They reflect, and are consistent with, the moral virtues and ethical principles that underpin any decent society. It is important that they are explained within that wider context, for it is vital that soldiers understand these Values and Standards and are able to apply them in today's complex operations. To that end, the articulation of these Values and Standards needs to be accompanied by a continuous and appropriate example; by all commanders, junior and senior alike. Our Values and Standards apply at all times: whether on operations, in barracks, in our homes or off duty.

## **The Operational Imperative**

- 4** For the Army, the consequences of winning or losing on operations are profound, for the Nation, the Army and for the individual. Consequently British Military Doctrine states that operational effectiveness is the standard by which the Army will be judged, and defines it in terms of fighting power. Within the hierarchy of fighting power it lays emphasis on the moral component: the ability to get people to fight. For the Army, this is achieved in the Land environment where operations are at their most complex.
- 5** Soldiers are required to close with the enemy, possibly in the midst of innocent bystanders, and fight; and to continue operating in the face of mortal danger. This is a group activity, at all scales of effort and intensities. Soldiers are part of a team, and the effectiveness of that team depends on each individual playing his or her part to the full. Success depends above all else on good morale, which is the spirit that enables soldiers to triumph over adversity: morale linked to, and reinforced by, discipline.
- 6** Morale consists of many factors, including confidence in equipment, good training and sound administration; but ultimately it is the confidence between commanders and subordinates and between individual soldiers. Such confidence is a product of leadership and comradeship. High morale cannot be created overnight, but requires the forging of close bonds of professional and personal trust, which will withstand the stresses imposed by the demands of operations. It requires commitment and self-sacrifice and to put the interests of the team and the task ahead of one's own.

- 7** Values and Standards directly contribute to the Army's ethos and to fighting power. They are a moral requirement and have functional utility. Upholding them is the collective responsibility of all members of the Army. They are the foundations of teamwork, and are interdependent. If any one of them is lacking, the team and the mission are threatened. They are fostered and enhanced by good leadership, training and man-management, throughout the chain of command.

*'The military virtues are not in a class apart; "they are virtues which are virtues in every walk of life ... none the less virtues for being jewels set in blood and iron." They include such qualities as courage, fortitude and loyalty. What is important about such qualities as these ...is that they acquire in the military context, in addition to their moral significance, a functional significance as well. The essential function of an armed force is to fight in battle. Given equally advanced military techniques a force in which the qualities I have mentioned are more highly developed will usually defeat a stronger force in which they are less. Thus while you may indeed hope to meet these virtues in every walk of life and a good deal of educational effort is spent on developing them as being generally desirable, in the profession of arms they are functionally indispensable. The training, group organizations, the whole pattern of life of the professional man at arms is designed in a deliberate effort to foster them, not just because they are morally desirable in themselves, but because they contribute to military efficiency.'*

"The Profession of Arms" - The 1962 Lees Knowles lectures,  
Lt Gen Sir John Hackett

# Values

### Selfless Commitment

- 8** The British Army is structured and trained for operations, not for the convenience of administration in barracks. On joining the Army soldiers accept a commitment to serve whenever and wherever they are needed, whatever the difficulties or dangers may be. Such commitment imposes certain limitations on individual freedom, and requires a degree of self-sacrifice. Ultimately it may require soldiers to lay down their lives. Implicitly it requires those in positions of authority to discharge in full their moral responsibilities to subordinates. Selfless commitment is reflected in the wording of the Oath of Allegiance which is taken on attestation. In it, soldiers agree to subordinate their own interests to those of the unit, Army and Nation, as represented by the Crown:

*“ I swear by almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend her Majesty, her heirs and successors in person, crown and dignity against all enemies and will observe and obey all orders of her Majesty, her heirs and successors and of the generals and officers set over me.”<sup>1</sup>*

- 9** Irrespective of private beliefs, this Oath embodies the context within which the British Army fights and operates. It expresses the loyalty of every soldier to the Sovereign as Head of State. These relationships find expression in the Colours, Standards and other emblems of Regimental and Corps spirit, which derive from the Sovereign. Personal commitment is the foundation of military service. Soldiers must be prepared to serve whenever and wherever required and to do their best at all times. This means putting the needs of the mission and of the team before personal interests.

<sup>1</sup> Those who do not believe in God “Solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm”

## **Courage**

- 10** All soldiers must be prepared to use lethal force to fight: to take the lives of others, and knowingly to risk their own. They may need to show restraint, even when doing so involves personal danger. They may witness the injury or death of their comrades but still continue with the task in hand. This requires physical courage, and soldiers will depend on each other for it. Moral courage is equally important. That is the courage to do what is right even when it may be unpopular, or risk ridicule or danger, and to insist on maintaining the highest standards of decency and behaviour at all times. This earns respect and fosters trust. Courage - both physical and moral - creates the strength upon which fighting spirit and success on operations depend. It is a quality needed by every soldier, but it is especially important for those placed in positions of authority, because others will depend on their lead and respond to it.

## **Discipline**

- 11** To be effective on operations, the Army must act as a disciplined force: commanders' orders carried out, everybody confident that they will not be let down by their comrades. Discipline is the primary antidote to fear and maintains operational effectiveness: it is supported by team loyalty, trust and professionalism. Discipline instils self-control and breeds self-confidence. Good discipline means that all soldiers will obey orders, under the worst conditions of war, and to do so with imagination and resource. The best discipline is self-discipline: innate, not imposed. The Army expects self-discipline from every soldier, and training aims to strengthen it. Discipline requires clearly understood rules and a military legal system to enforce it. This discipline system must be fairly applied both on and off duty by all those in positions of authority.

### **Integrity**

- 12** Soldiers must be welded into strong and robust teams in order to achieve success on operations, where individual needs and desires are subordinated to those of the team, however unpalatable or dangerous. Therefore, integrity has a unique significance to soldiering, it is essential to trust: soldiers must have complete trust in each of their comrades for their lives may ultimately depend on it. Integrity means being honest and truthful. All forms of deceit and dishonesty constitute a lack of integrity: they call into question whether an individual can be relied upon, damaging the team and therefore operational effectiveness. All commanders are responsible for defining and maintaining standards of personal behaviour in the Army by example, direction and education. Integrity also demands that those who are in positions of authority, at whatever level, set the highest standards and are fair and consistent to their subordinates. A leader's example in personal behaviour is vital, and this responsibility increases with rank.

### **Loyalty**

- 13** Loyalty binds all ranks of the Army together: it goes both up and down. It turns individuals into teams, creating and strengthening the formations, units and sub-units of which the Army is composed. The Nation, the Army and the chain of command rely on the continuing allegiance, commitment and support of all who serve: that is, on their loyalty. Equally important is that all soldiers, and their families, must be confident that the Army and the Nation will treat them with loyalty and fairness. The Army's loyalty to the individual is expressed in the Military Covenant - it manifests itself in justice, fair rewards, and life-long support to all soldiers.

**14** Those in authority must be loyal to their subordinates: representing their interests faithfully, dealing with complaints thoroughly and developing their abilities through progressive training. Subordinates must be loyal to their leaders, their team, and their duty. Being loyal to ones' leaders or subordinates does not mean that wrong-doing should be condoned or covered up: this is misplaced loyalty and questions a soldier's integrity. Loyalty, though expected, must be earned through commitment, self-sacrifice, courage, professionalism, decency and integrity. These qualities are required both on and off duty as they are enduring characteristics that cannot be turned on and off at will.

### **Respect for Others**

**15** Respect for others is a hallmark of the British Army: it comes from the duty to put others first and means that there is no place for prejudice or favouritism. Like loyalty, respect for others goes both up and down the chain of command and sideways among peers. The Army's recruiting motto 'Be the Best' can only have meaning if all members of it have equality of treatment and opportunity.

**16** Respect for others also extends to the treatment of all human beings, especially the victims of conflict, the dead, the wounded, prisoners and civilians, particularly those we have deployed to help. All soldiers must act within the law and the nature of modern, complex, land based operations makes it essential that they maintain the highest standards of decency and fairness at all times, even under the most difficult of conditions. External scrutiny, including intense media interest, is now an attendant part of all aspects of military life. Soldiering is about duty: so soldiers should be ready to uphold the rights of others before claiming their own.



# Standards

### **The Army's Standards**

- 17** The Values outlined above underpin the ethos of the Army and contribute directly to achieving operational effectiveness. In sustaining these Values, every soldier must strive to achieve and maintain the highest professional and personal standards. It is impractical to identify here every standard required in every aspect of a soldier's professional and private life. The Army's Standards are designed to ensure that all behaviour is lawful; appropriate; and totally professional. Commanders have to understand the context and set out the Standards in sufficient detail required by the situation; clear communication on what is expected and why is essential. Officers and soldiers must avoid behaviour that risks degrading their professional ability or which may undermine morale by damaging the trust and respect that exists between individuals who depend on each other. For this reason the Army takes a different and more demanding approach towards certain types of behaviour and relationships that might, in society, be regarded as a matter of individual choice or morality, and of no concern to the wider community.

### **Lawful**

- 18** All soldiers are subject to the criminal law of England wherever they are serving, and they have a duty to uphold it. In that respect they are no different from other citizens, and all civil offences have been fully embraced within military law<sup>2</sup>. When deployed on operations soldiers are subject to international law, including the laws of armed conflict and the prescribed rules of engagement, and in some cases local civil law. Taken together, such laws establish the baseline for the standards of personal conduct of the soldier as a citizen.

- 19** All soldiers have the right to live and work in an environment free from harassment, unlawful discrimination and intimidation. Any unjustifiable behaviour that results in soldiers being unfairly treated is fundamentally incompatible with the ethos of the Army, and is not to be tolerated. Discrimination and harassment may also contravene civil and criminal law: any form of discrimination or harassment undermines trust and confidence, especially in those in positions of authority.
- 20** Operational effectiveness requires the Army to be physically robust and, when necessary, to display controlled aggression: this requires rigorous and demanding training. However, the use of physical strength or the abuse of authority to intimidate or victimise others, or to give unlawful punishments is unacceptable and will undermine trust and respect. It is also illegal. It is the responsibility of commanders to protect others from physical and mental bullying, and to deal with it promptly.

### **Appropriate Behaviour**

- 21** The operational imperative to sustain team cohesion and to maintain trust and loyalty between commanders and those they command imposes a need for a standard of social behaviour more demanding than those required by society at large. This is equally necessary both on and off operations, on and off duty. It is important to acknowledge in the tightly knit military community the need for mutual respect and the requirement to avoid conduct that offends others.

**22** Social misbehaviour can undermine trust and cohesion and, therefore, damage operational effectiveness. It is not practicable to list every type of conduct or relationship that may constitute social misbehaviour<sup>3</sup>, but it includes: unwelcome sexual attention; over-familiarity with the spouses or partners of other Service personnel; displays of affection which might cause offence to others; behaviour which damages or hazards the marriage or personal relationships of Service personnel or civilian colleagues within the wider defence community; and taking sexual advantage of subordinates. The seriousness with which misconduct will be regarded will depend on the individual circumstances that prevail at that time and the potential for adversely affecting operational effectiveness. Nevertheless, misconduct involving abuse of position, trust or rank, or taking advantage of an individual's separation will be viewed as being particularly serious.

### **Total Professionalism**

**23** It is axiomatic that all soldiers must exercise the highest standards of professionalism, as befits their rank and appointment, at all times to both safeguard operational effectiveness and also the Army's reputation.

**24** Members of the Army are not permitted to disclose Service information or express views on official matters or experiences to any media organisation without prior approval from the Ministry of Defence, sought through the chain of command; this includes leaking official information to the media. Besides being contrary to regulations, it is unprofessional and can damage the reputation and interests of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces and, whether intentional or not, undermines the Army's apolitical position.

3 Greater detail can be found in Annex B to AGAI 67 - the Armed Forces Code of Conduct.

- 25** The effects of excessive drinking are severe: impaired judgement, endangered health, degraded performance and are the major cause of ill discipline. It generates a loss of self-control, which can lead to unacceptable behaviour accompanied by criminal violence. Personnel under the influence of alcohol cannot be relied upon to perform their duties competently; putting their own lives and those of others at risk. Excessive alcohol consumption is not to be tolerated; drunkenness is a military offence. Commanders are to ensure that social functions take place in a controlled environment, where alcohol is consumed responsibly and that there is no degeneration into excessive drinking. They must also set an example through their own moderation. Failure to do so will call into question their self-discipline and moral courage, and their ability to exercise the responsibilities of their rank. Help will be offered to those willing to reform, but those who do not respond to rehabilitation will be considered for discharge. Driving under the influence of alcohol is a particularly serious offence that endangers others and displays a lack of judgement and self-discipline: a conviction will almost certainly affect an individual's employment and career in the Army.
- 26** Drug misuse is not only illegal, it poses a significant threat to operational effectiveness. Drug misusers are a liability to themselves and to their colleagues: their judgement is impaired; their health damaged; and their performance degraded. In short, they can be neither trusted nor relied upon. The Army's policy for those who commit a drug offence is based on dismissal.
- 27** Those entrusted with public and non-public funds must adhere to unswervingly the appropriate financial regulations. Dishonesty and deception in the control and management of these funds is not a 'victimless crime' but show a lack of integrity and moral courage which have a corrosive affect on operational effectiveness through the breakdown in trust.

- 28** Officers and soldiers also are expected to manage their own financial affairs responsibly. Such matters are usually regarded as personal, but where the Army becomes involved, administrative or disciplinary action may be taken. Unmanageable or irresponsible indebtedness displays a lack of judgement and self-discipline. It may create an administrative burden, and could lead to an individual becoming a security risk. Cases involving those in a position of responsibility are particularly serious because they call into question their ability to manage the welfare of subordinates and public funds. Whilst the Army will counsel and advise personnel who are in debt, irresponsible indebtedness is likely to affect an individual's employment and career.

### **APPLICATION**

- 29** Inculcating and maintaining the Army's Values and Standards is the responsibility of all commanders. It requires more than a single period of instruction (MATT 6) per year; it must pervade all training activity, career development and be the focus of all leaders on what example their subordinates also should concentrate. As with mission command, commanders must give direction, delegate and then supervise. Where the 'bottom line' is not profit and loss, but the death or maiming of people including comrades, all soldiers must understand why they have to behave in a particular way, rather than following a set of rules blindly. Although Values and Standards can be imposed and regulated through discipline, it is self-discipline that will encourage all ranks to adhere to the Values and Standards, recognising the inherent value of such qualities and conduct.
- 30** Commanders must recognise that this is challenging, requiring them to provide leadership and example. Therefore, all commanders must lead by example: they are responsible for explaining, instilling and ensuring that these Values and Standards are understood and adhered to by their subordinates. Effective and timely communication between commanders and subordinates is crucial to this process.

### **The Service Test**

- 31** Individuals who fail to uphold the Values and Standards may be subject to disciplinary or administrative action. Unacceptable conduct requires prompt and positive action to prevent damage: timely advice and informal action can often prevent a situation developing to the point where it could impair the effectiveness of a unit. A decision on what action is taken and the extent of that action will depend on the circumstances of each case, measured against the Service Test outlined below. In assessing whether to take action, commanders must establish the seriousness of the misconduct and its impact on operational effectiveness, and, in turn the appropriate and proportionate level of sanction. In particularly serious cases, or where an individual persists with, or has a history of acts of misconduct, commanders should consider the termination of service.
- 32** When considering possible cases of misconduct, and in determining whether the Army has a duty to intervene in the personal lives of its soldiers, commanders at every level must consider each case against the following Service Test:
- “ Have the actions or behaviour of an individual adversely impacted or are they likely to impact on the efficiency or operational effectiveness of the Army (unit)?”
- 33** Commanders are required to make a judgement of actions, set against the context of character and circumstances based on objective fact. Implicit in this is that in order to make a judgement, a commander’s commitment to Values and Standard must be beyond reproach and he must play a dynamic role in the adherence to Values and Standards in his command.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 34** The Army's Values and Standards demand a degree of commitment and self-sacrifice from officer and soldiers, which goes beyond that normally expected from other citizens. All officers and soldiers in the British Army are required to commit themselves to achieving and maintaining these Values and Standards. This commitment is essential to the ethos of the Army and contributes directly to the maintenance of operational effectiveness. It is the duty of all commanders to ensure that these Values and Standards are accorded the highest priority, are fully explained to their soldiers, and are applied consistently. Commanders at every level must lead by example, and encourage their subordinates to live by its Values and to live up to its Standards.





