VALUE, VALUES AND THE BRITISH ARMY

A Seminar Report

Edited by

Patrick Mileham

The Institute for Advanced Studies
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and the

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INTRODUCTION

The Seminar, which is reported in this document, was arranged as part of the Institute Project **Costing Values**. The Project has three goals:

1. to identify and analyse fundamental ideas on which everyday decisions rest, throughout the world, but which rarely receive such attention;

2. to bring together from different walks of life the very people who make the daily decisions and need to reflect on such ideas - leaders from industry, commerce, politics, the diplomatic world, as well as from specialised professions and research institutes;

3. to challenge and transcend the boundaries of current thinking by insisting on perspectives from different cultures.

All participants in the seminars and conversations associated with the project consider three questions:

- what values are upheld in our particular communities?
- what resources are needed to implement them?
- what sacrifices must be made to pursue such priorities?

In transcribing the tapes of the meeting, the editor has wisely sought to retain the tone of dialogue. Nevertheless, the discussions here recorded and published with the agreement of the participants were held under Chatham House rules, and for this reason none of the comments is attributable. Naturally, a report of such diverse personal views and experiences represents neither the views of any one person, nor the agreement of all.

Peter Jones
Director

SUMMARY

The British Army is held in high regard internationally and by the nation. The Army sets high standards of professionalism, good management and leadership. Its education, training and personal development practices deserve to be valued by the population in general. Its leaving officers and soldiers will continue to make a substantial contribution to society and the economy.

The values' system of the Army is inherently strong but is not well articulated internally, and not placed in the public domain. Nevertheless, its ethos, professionalism and fighting spirit has largely been validated by the experience in the Falklands, Gulf War and on peacekeeping operations over the years.

An Army, however, which feels isolated from society can become unduly defensive, militaristic or ineffective for its roles. Its isolation is increased if it does not face external debate squarely.

Internal debate during peacetime is healthy for an Army. While command and hierarchical structures must not be

weakened, a balanced and responsible expression of opinion at all levels positively can help the Chain of Command and raise the Army's morale overall.

While some aspects of the Army's life and structure present no internal problems, viewed from the outside they seem old fashioned and reactionary. The public rightly or wrongly do not like overt authority and hierarchy, for instance.

There are also certain social issues which, perhaps out of proportion to their real overall significance, have recently come under public scrutiny formally and informally, which has caused the Army to falter.

Certain aspects of Military Law, discipline, terms of service and the Military Justice system need to be adjusted to modern expectations - without prejudice to the Army's discipline, improvements in its morale and the trust and value the nation places on the Army.

The portrayal of the Army by the media, particularly TV, has sometimes been unfortunate. While some Army practices and persons come over well to the public, others do not. It is the real Army, not the defensive Army, that the public wishes to

know. Army PR could be more proactive and 'natural'.

The Army appears not to have a comprehensive understanding of society, or the basis of good civil-military relations beyond normal PR activities. The Army needs to develop its understanding of civil-military relations, promote an understanding of its values system, and justify its performance amongst the wider public. Then it will be able to argue convincingly and confidently its right to be different on really important values and practices.

OPENING REMARKS

Professor Peter Jones welcomed the participants. He referred to his Institute, its purpose and the appropriateness of the subject of the seminar to the work of the Institute.

Mr Patrick Mileham described the background to the Seminar and his own particular task to produce a draft paper for the Adjutant General. The aim set was 'to examine the essential requirements of military service and the present and likely future trends in society during the next 20 years in sufficient depth, to recommend the extent to which the Army can adapt with the latter, without jeopardising the former'.

EXTERNAL VALUES, SOCIETY AND ARMY

PERCEPTIONS

The British Army is having to face a period of great change and it has realised the need for some fundamental re-thinking of its position on many matters, before it can make firm plans for its future. A central premise of social enquiry is that self-knowledge is a fruitful prelude to better understanding by

others. A premise of rational planning is that change occurs at all levels, and at different rates, whether or not one prepares for it. Since at least the eighteenth century, notions of change, context and complexity have played central roles in problem analysis. But the current rates of change in complex issues prevent accurate prediction, except in the short term. This means that long term strategies and the configurations for implementing them are increasingly difficult to devise.

Rapid changes in social attitudes and law reflect and promote increased awareness amongst citizens of personal rights and freedoms and raise questions about the nature of Service life and Service practice. Current expectations within a Higher Education society (almost 50% of the school leaving population now receive some form of higher education) - especially those concerning freedom of enquiry, speech and expression - call for the most rigorous development of intellectual capacities.

'Imperatives' deemed to be necessary for an all-volunteer Armed Service require careful study. No institution which regards itself as significantly anchored in its history and traditions can survive on proclamation of beliefs alone, when others are either ignorant of those historical links or reject the interpretation offered. Churches, universities, governments of

various forms have all foundered on such mistakes. Moreover, as they become aware of the need to change, there is a tendency for institutions to turn inwards, resent outside challenge, and thus fail to adapt.

British society's view of the Army has always been ambivalent. On the one hand the nation is reluctant to spend on defence. The Army's size is continually cut and it is grudged suitable training areas. Quite widespread among the younger generation there is indifference, not to say hostility, towards the concepts of service, discipline and loyalty for which the Army stands. On the other hand the nation likes the pomp and circumstance the Army can lay on - the annual sell-out of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in Scotland is witness to that. Civilians admire the Army's tangible achievements. The Falklands gave a perceptible lift to the Nation's morale. Television has brought almost daily pictures of British troops in action/duty in Ulster. The admiration of the British public is with the young soldiers behaving professionally in the face of severe provocation. In the Gulf and Bosnia, the excellent impression created by obviously intelligent, thinking, articulate officers with seemingly impossible tasks, remind people of the contribution the Army is making towards bringing peace and security to some troubled parts of the World. Such work is, or

should be, a source of national pride.

To anyone who has spent time representing Britain abroad, the esteem in which the British Armed Forces are held is a very positive factor. A war like the Falklands may not be desirable in itself, but it certainly raised our standing abroad: as have contributions in the Gulf and Bosnia. It is fashionable mtoday to decry the 'special relationship' with the United States of America. But when the 'chips are down' the USA knows that in Britain and, for all their awkwardness, France, it has allies who are prepared and able to act. The same thing cannot be said for the economic super powers of Japan and Germany. Thus as a representative British institution, the Army does not have a problem with its image abroad. In fact the reverse is true; it is extremely highly regarded.

The problems the Army has lie at home. To maintain its effectiveness, the Army must continue relentlessly to convince Government, Parliament and the voting public that it represents a good, not to say essential investment. In today's climate that is not easy: the Army is very expensive and its requirements are not widely understood and may not seem directly relevant to the needs of society. Tanks and guns on Ltineburg Heath are one thing: on Salisbury Plain or the Otterburn Ranges another.

Money for new equipment and conditions of service that encourage recruiting and retention to maintain effectiveness, have to be found from the same public purse, which is exposed to the insatiable demands of welfare and education. The Army, therefore, cannot, afford to become isolated and cannot let up in its efforts to convince the public that it makes an essential and cost effective contribution to the moral well-being of the United Kingdom.

There is a brighter side. In the opinion polls, when the public think more objectively than normal, professional servicemen normally come second only to the medical professionals in public esteem. The Army gives the impression of knowing where it wants to go in a way which cannot perhaps be said of the Civil Service and certainly not of the Church of England. It is admired for its professionalism, discipline and integrity. It is not yet exposed to the same critical scrutiny as the police; nor is it involved day to day with the murkier aspects of society in quite the same way.

There has actually been an immense improvement in the underlying attitudes of the public to the Army over the years. Once the Army was looked down on, and in the 1960s and 1970s was mistrusted by young people, particularly in the universities.

The high esteem enjoyed by the Armed Services compared with all other institutions must be maintained and built on. The Army itself should take the initiative.

SOCIAL ISSUES

In taking this initiative, however, there are dangers in the Army failing to see its wider role within the context of British society. External values are increasingly going to set the tone for the contiguous areas between the Army and the civilian community. Thus it is very important to unpick or unscramble what one could call the filters of perception through which attitudes are struck by the public in respect of the Army and vice versa. Kipling's 'Tommy' captures an attitude which is never far below the surface:

> 'O it's Tommy this an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy go away";
> But it's "Thank you Mister Atkins," when the bands begin to play'

That kind of thing has repeated itself throughout this century.

In arriving at a code of values and an ethical framework for corporate standards, it is helpful to work back from specific issues which, either by choice or force of circumstance, are

already on, or going to be on, the Army's agenda. Some are values, others are abstract politico-legal constraints.

- **Pride in Service.** This sometimes appears to be arrogance towards civilians and their work.

- **Garrison housing / community integration.** This certainly affects the way external organisations and communities view the Services. Some UK garrisons are far too self-contained and therefore isolated from society. Others are very well integrated in the local community.

- **Equal Opportunities.** The public are with the Forces on some aspects of equal opportunities and against them on others. The public is entirely with the Forces on the manifest sense of outrage at the financial awards to servicewomen, whose careers were terminated or interrupted by pregnancy.

- **Racism.** In the public service racism should not be tolerated.

- **Homosexuality.** The public would hate to see the military put into a situation of constantly having to retreat on this issue. The sooner the military grasp the nettle and recognise that it is sexual behaviour that is the problem, not sexual orientation, the better.

- **Bullying.** From time to time reports of bullying adversely affect public perceptions, parental attitudes and recruiting.

- **The impact of European Community law and the European Convention on Human Rights.** This includes challenges to the standards of justice in the Courts-Martial system and legal structure.

- **Officer/soldier divide.** There appears to be a caste barrier between two classes, the commissioned officer class on one level and the warrant officer and other rank class below.

- **Special Units.** There is some public concern over 'special units' which in view of their secretiveness may be beyond public control.

The common external factor is that all these issues have recently exercised the civilian mind and will continue to do so. There is however, a further warning in all this. Very often in the immediate context of a particular problem it is easy to rush to a solution solutions themselves often create their own new problems. The Army by its nature always instinctively needs to find definitive and unequivocal solutions. Military policy documents, instructions and even Staff College instructions, answers and papers, are very much more cut and dried than their equivalents in civilian life, with very few blurred edges. Yet most of life, including the Military's work in peacetime, is about blurred edges.

MILITARISM

On the subject of secrecy and 'military means', there is a political risk when it comes to special forces like the SAS. The SAS have operated within the UK at times, without the country knowing it, and the authorities must be very, very certain it has complete control over them.

For instance the French paras in Algeria became a little state of their own with their own political agenda. The Israeli

Army too is believed to be militarily efficient and effective. They obey their officers (whom they treat as equals out of operations) when on operational duty within their boundaries. The Haganah experience (undercover forces before becoming the legitimate army) of the Israeli Army was built upon the idea of a 'people in arms' surrounded by a hostile sea. Everything of the Haganah codes was designed in a very highly democratic spirit and they regard it as an extension of their democratic Institutions. Yet Israeli soldiers are often seen operating in independent groups of twos and threes treating the Palestinians appallingly: they can be simply a law unto themselves in a way that is intolerable to civilised nations. This shows that the 'cause' of being on active duty is very important to any army, particularly when it is fighting for homeland, women and children and property. When Israeli soldiers invaded South Lebanon, the Israeli Army fell apart because they went outside the defence mission and their understanding of what they were doing.

The British, too, operate outside national borders and have to be careful. A young officer who served with the SAS in the Gulf War reported that he and a sergeant were operating together. The sergeant wanted to execute some of the Iraqis. The officer stopped him. While this case might not occur often,

it demonstrates categorically the officer-NCO divide. (The SAS of course may not be regarded by other soldiers as they seem to be in the popular imagination - fed as it is on James Bond and espionage thrillers.) The officers are there to make moral judgements - what is lawful and acceptable and what is not. That is the value of having an Army which can restrain itself, so clearly demonstrated in Northern Ireland and so far in Bosnia.

There will always be dangers in a closed and regimented society which is doing a very different kind of job from the rest of society. The British Army fortunately is not involved in politics and this tradition is unlikely to change. There are two social trends which the Army should observe and must accept. One is egalitarianism and dislike of any class or hierarchical social system, and the other is accountability - the demand by the public to scrutinise public institutions at all levels. There are thus dangers if the Army becomes cut off from the norms of society, because it has a set of values which appear to be challenged. The ambiguity of its position is that it has to do its military job and to reflect civil society.

PROBLEMS WITH THE MEDIA

While the whole country has been impressed by much of the media coverage of the Army, at the same time the BBC and others have been issuing a series of distorting documentaries and fictional films, which show other aspects of Service life.

There were two striking things about the documentaries. One was the screaming and continual hectoring and bullying by NCOs of recruits in an otherwise very good programme on television called *'In the Company of Men'*. One saw a company commander, obviously very competent in all sorts of ways, justifying treatment of men in this way - justifying the intense concentration on detail, the polished button, the polished shoe, and explaining these activities as part of 'character training'. This sort of insight into the Army alienates the public, particularly the intelligent young. That having been said, people in the Army can be equally horrified by their own portrayal. The fictional TV programme *'Soldier, Soldier'* is damaging to morale and many parts of the Army do not work like that at all.

Often it is the Territorial Army Officer and soldier who can see most clearly the grave misconception held by civilians of

the Army, as well as the regular soldiers' views of civilian occupations and society.* The TA itself certainly could not work if the old unmodified stereotyped traditions still existed.

Other perceptions are to do with the Army's culture. For instance, on the one hand there is the display of decorous dinners in regimental mess kit, with tables loaded with regimental silver and, on the other, yobbish drinking from beer cans in the NAAFI canteen for the other half of the Army. This appears to the public to be the perpetuating of the old class distinctions. The perception within the Army of how the public sees them is one matter, the perception within the public of what the Army represents is another. The reality in both cases is different again. One can watch on television groaning tables and flashing silver and so on, and one can draw a class lesson from it, or one can draw a faintly ridiculous lesson from it: but one would be surprised to find these lessons being drawn by soldiers. While there is obviously no real organisational problem about the Military hierarchy, that too is subject to people's perceptions. Actually, soldiers are much more comfortable with

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*[Editor's footnote. The TA have a charter aim to promote good civil-military understanding. It is the chief *raison d'etre* of the University Officers Training Corps.]

the hierarchy situation as it is, than outsiders would perceive or understand.

It is, however, the caste gap between the NCOs and the commissioned officers which offends or confuses outsiders. While these images may be distorted, they remain and lead directly to questions about the theory of hierarchical authoritarianism. The difficulty is that the hierarchical nature of command in war and on operations is an absolute necessity for discipline. For instance, it was very noticeable that, when the Croatian Army in 1995 suddenly started to move in successfully, they showed professionalism for the first time. Compared with their yobbish images of only two years before, they way they worked was remarkable. The American Army became positively disciplined and hierarchical overnight, and an American warship's standards of smartness and discipline at least matched our own. To see British soldiers in Bosnia doing their duty in the way they have always done is exemplary. They are smart and properly dressed. They speak up directly when spoken to. They are doing their duty quietly and firmly.

Faults, however, do go with any hierarchical system. There has undoubtedly been very strong nepotism in the British Army, yet the democratisation of the British Army has been the

subject of study and writing over decades. At one time the Grieg Report advocated that commissions were to be replaced by a system of promotion through the ranks along the lines of the police. While there has undoubtedly been very strong nepotism in the British Army, the officers' background has changed greatly and is much more widely representative of the public at large than it has ever been in the past. In other words the democratisation in this sense of the Army does continue as society itself changes.

Yet the idea that a hierarchical structure obliterates democracy is misleading. Nobody is suggesting, for example, that ICI is suddenly democratised. People do require a management structure. Hierarchies evolve and different forms of hierarchy match needs. There are endless case studies demonstrating that if you want fast action, you need a tough structure: if you want creative action, you need a loose structure and flexible alternatives. While there is varying democracy in units, the chain of command is being flattened: while some treat soldiers according to old stereotypes, in other units young soldiers are being recognised as wanting to be treated as much more sophisticated people.

The Army does not need to retreat into political

correctness, as there are strong hierarchical structures in other fields. In the profession of law hierarchy may be more extreme than in the Army and distinctions in Academia are much the same. Some people surprisingly like the idea of 'officers' and 'a hierarchy' in institutions, since they can then instinctively place on trust the visible office holders. Thus it could be that the majority of the public like the distinction between officers and non-commissioned officers and would support its continuation in the Army. The Army's hierarchy works for the Army, as other hierarchies work for their institutions and organisations. The crucial matter is that the distinction must be periodically redefined and explained to the public.

CIVIL/MILITARY RELATIONS

It does seem that the Army has withdrawn from an enormous number of its points of contact with the public. For instance, over many years soldiers used to appear on outward bound courses with every other kind of person who was there. That was a point of contact during which some general and intellectual discussion took place about the way the Army was. The Services need to get contact back with the public by whatever means they can.

It would also appear the Army's Public Relations is not being made full use of, since, rightly or wrongly, the Army sees PR as being essentially a defensive operation. The presentations by Army spokespersons reading from prepared scripts too often typify and represent the establishment and authority: too often the Colonel Blimp figure is still there and he does not come across at all well.

The Army has indeed missed a huge opportunity in respect of the coverage of our troops in Bosnia and elsewhere. Its own PR teams should make films to present on national television, showing soldiers doing a real job in Bosnia, in the Gulf and in Northern Ireland. Where are the pictures of those wonderful soldiers who are out there in the cold, living in burnt out hotels with no water, driving on long stretches of roads with great danger of mines etc? Where is the television coverage to show people at home, not unlike them, what soldiers are actually doing? Those being addressed want to hear and see the real natural Army, unprompted by defensiveness.

PR properly means, and is officially regarded as, the extension of the will of the commander, i.e. what the commander has actually got on his mind at the moment. The issues under discussion are not really G3 PR, PInfo or anything else. One is

actually referring to a neglected area of Staff function - G5 Civil/Military Relations. Educating the Army to regard those as wholly different roles is most important. G3 PR is defensive if it needs to be; offensive if it needs to be, and concerned with what the Commander wants here and now, directly linked to his mission. G5's role is about the ability of the Army to work in the community, with the community, through the community and to derive its support from the community at all times. In the long term, it is about the Military understanding society and vice versa.

On the central point about the media in its various forms, a large proportion of the community is increasingly worried about its accountability. This University Institute has been trying for some time to orchestrate meetings on the accountability of the media. It is extraordinarily difficult to get representatives of the media to take part in a rational discussion, without them being self-righteous and pompous. Amongst a lot of academic work on the media, it has been found that the amount of information ingested visually from television is vastly less, in terms of the capacity of individuals to remember what they have seen, than the amount of information from the radio or from texts. While the visual impact is very strong, it is also extraordinarily superficial and fades.

INTERNAL VALUES OF THE ARMY

VALUES

The internal values of the Army are not a new issue for debate. Much work has been done over the last ten years or more, some of it producing evidence on subjects that have preoccupied the Army for generations. Indeed, Antony Beevor (author of *Inside the British Army*) quoted a conversation between Field Marshal Templer and Lord Moran (author of *The Anatomy of Courage*) that took place in 1952. The events referred to happened in 1943, and seemed to suggest that the Army of that time had declined in fighting spirit and morale since the First World War. The inference was that changes in society attitudes had contributed to the decay.

This issue is not about relentless and stubborn resistance to change, or about political correctness and revisionism. It is about the balance between the special needs, ethos and demands of the Army and the characteristics of the society from which it is drawn and, ultimately, on which it must rely for support and strength. The Army must not be so sensitive and defensive to what may be passing trends in society, that its fighting power is diluted to the point of ineffectiveness.

The ultimate purpose of the Army is to deliver measured and controlled force in support of political objectives. At the top of the scale, that means going to war. At the other end, it might mean quasi-military operations in support of the State, ranging from reassurance and deterrence, disaster relief, through to the preservation of vital facilities during industrial action, to peace keeping, counter-terrorism and near-police operations. Notwithstanding comments about balance, those characteristics demand an approach to recruiting, retention, training, management and leadership that is essentially different from that of any other kind of organisation, be it State-directed or commercially driven. While the Army leaders should be aware of and sensitive to social, political and even economic factors, they lose sight of that difference at their and the nation's peril.

What is the difference? What is the balance between the natural tendency of the Army to reflect some of the characteristics of society, and the Army's responsibility to nourish its own internal values and, in the process, in some way to influence those characteristics? If it is useful to examine such a balance, then the question of the Army's internal values might be sought out and determined, i.e. what values and characteristics are crucial to the Army's role, before going on to see which of those values might also be ones from which civil

society could itself gain. Unquestionably a consideration of the extent to which the Army has a right to be different should begin from the position that it has much that is admirable, much to offer society, and much of substance with which to influence it.

There is a view, supported by work conducted by Charles Moskos in the United States, that the military have moved generally from an institutional culture to an occupational one. The former is characterised by self-sacrifice, dedication, loyalty and a sense of duty, while the latter is characterised by careerism, self-interest and the separation of work and personal life. There is a strong belief and perception that there remains an element of vocation in the British Armed Forces, which should be nurtured, encouraged and rewarded.

The essential differences that distinguish the Army from other parts of society, or rather those which are relevant and valuable, are:

- a code of discipline that demands obedience in the best interests of the organisation,
- a powerful sense of cohesion and group loyalty, be that group a Regiment or a Section,

- a system of training that transcends personal instincts and weaknesses.

Each of those qualities places upon the Army's leaders an enormous burden of responsibility, since each represents, to a degree, the surrender of some personal liberty.

It has been proved that fashion and pressure groups are at odds with the true underlying values of societies, which often appear dormant but actually faithfully reflect military virtues. Cohesion has obviously got to be based on trust and that in turn is based on the integrity of the individual. These factors should be clear within the Army. People have to accept some diminution of their rights as individuals, if they accept membership of the Army. That is not difficult to ask for, because as long as it is a volunteer Army, they should know what they are volunteering for. There has to be at the end of the day an acceptance of obedience to hierarchical command, and that there is no escape from that in the Army.

The law, as it applies to the Armed Forces in the shape of 'The Army Act', 'The Naval Discipline Act', Queen's Regulations etc., is generally framed to provide a code of discipline, creating offences that in other circumstances might

simply be regarded as breaches of contract, or less. But military law could perhaps benefit from scrutiny, some of it appearing to be founded upon conventions and social structures of a bygone age. What does 'conduct unbecoming an officer' really mean to the young subaltern of today? What about 'conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline'? Or even insubordination? While unwise, it is not a crime to be rude to the boss in civilian life, but it is in the military. Many of the acts of commission or omission covered by these laws are militarily reprehensible, but are they criminal acts? They are actually symptomatic of a deeper problem, like the poor quality of leadership or behaviour of the individual preferring a charge. Military law, like any other, can only be judged by its real relevance both to civil law and to the central purpose of the Army.

The force of argument that most readily balances privation, and sometimes compensates for the reduction of individual freedom, is the certainty that the organisation making such demands also delivers rewards. These rewards come not only in the form of good pay, but in the experiences of pride, job satisfaction, and perhaps most important of all, the knowledge of belonging to an organisation that cares about its people. Performance related pay, often suggested for public services,

could be very dangerous to the Army.

Those qualities required of servicemen and women are also vulnerable to dilution and degradation by forces within and outside the Service. Sadly, the recent history of all three Services is full of examples of the lowering of morale and professional standards and of miscarried justice. So too, is the history of the society from which we come. Who would have forecast ten years ago, or even five, that one would see compensation claims and other litigation being pursued by members of the Armed Forces, just like their civilian counterparts?

Some differences between the Army and the rest of society might be thought to be of little relevance or value. Some lie in areas of sacred tradition. Perhaps some of the more obvious ones include the value of some military ceremonial; the minefield of the special privileges that accompany high rank; the use of the Army as part of the entertainment industry; and the ponderous and often disquieting machine that is defence equipment procurement.

But to balance these comments, one has often been encouraged and impressed by the number of young entrants,

who, when asked why they joined, expressed their answer in terms of their general dissatisfaction with society, and their search for a set of values with which they could identify. Those values might be quite simple ones, like physical excellence, or they may be more complex, such as self discipline and loyalty. But they all reveal that a section, at least, of society is looking to the Armed Forces for something they cannot find elsewhere. Perhaps part of our focus should be upon the ways in which the Army can make a positive contribution to society while enhancing its own position within it. A relevant legal code, group loyalty and training, could, with very little licence in translation, be turned into respect for the law, community spirit and education - three of the issues that most preoccupy so many civilians today.

Group loyalty, cohesion, Regimental spirit, call it what you will, is a powerful force multiplier. Similarly if one asks a soldier why, for example, he strives for achievement, or why he did something out of the ordinary, he will often include in his answer something like 'So as not to let down my mates' - not 'serving my country or my Sovereign.' The phrase 'Team Building' is now a part of the lexicon of modem management-speak, but the balance between the demands of the group, so compelling in war, and the needs of privacy and self-respect for

the individual, is one that demands sensitive, intelligent and perceptive leadership. Such matters now need to be fully explained unequivocally and openly.*

OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE

It has to be well understood by soldiers and civilians alike that the Army's values and standards can only be properly validated during full-scale land operations. Perhaps the three most important contributory factors to success in war are training, training and training. During the Falklands campaign, there was a battalion-size silent night attack on Two Sisters mountain, occupied by two Argentinean companies. The fire plan, the approach, routes and timing, the command and control, the communications and the logistics were all down to the commanding officer. But having got to within 450 metres of the

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*[Editor's footnote. As recommended by both the editor's Draft and the final Army's *Right to be Different* Paper, *A Code of Conduct for the Army* is to be published and a scheme for internal education within the Army developed. The Army Board has also agreed to examine a more effective approach to leadership in a Paper *The Demands of Leadership over the Next Decade*.]

enemy position undetected in total darkness, when the Argentinean machine guns and mortars began to take their toll, it was not he who carried the day, or rather the night. It was the 20 year old foot soldiers [in this instance Marines] and 25 year old corporals and subalterns. And how did they do it? Training taught precision, attention to detail, team spirit, pride and obedience to orders. More than ever, the onus of quick thought and action rested on the shoulders of the individual soldier.

There are some telling observations made during the Gulf War which unlike the Falklands, involved a very large part of the Army. These observations impact on the whole idea of Army-wide loyalty, discipline, and small group cohesion. During operations there is frequently a feeling of being powerless over one's destiny, which was not only disconcerting but frightening. Not surprisingly, the formed units in the Gulf fared much better than the headquarters and logistic tail because they were all there in one place together, facing a shared collective experience. For example the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, as one would expect of a regiment of that calibre, were exactly as they would have been in training in the field - a little bit grimmer perhaps because they did not know exactly what was to come. Indeed, some soldiers serving with them from the Royal Tank Regiment

stated that the apparently different regiment was 'just the same as us'. For Scottish soldiers, this was quite an accolade.

However that impression was not carried over into the combat service support units at second and third line. There was the impression, driving up and down between the Headquarters, the port at Al-Jubayl, and the front line for about two weeks, of almost leaderless mobs of soldiers who seemed to lack any sort of cohesion at all. There seemed to be three main reasons for this.

First of all, because of the enormous amount of materiel that was coming in, the officers may have perceived that the management demands of the materiel were greater, or had higher priority, than the leadership demands of their personnel. Secondly, there was an impression that the standard of non-commissioned officers was not 'up to the mark'. Certainly it was not comparable with those of the front line units. That may be a reflection on how such NCOs are employed in peacetime in those units and, also, that there is a well-known gap in leadership training of non-commissioned officers in the Army.

The third reason was because most units had gone from a familiar situation in Germany, with its peacetime routine and

lines of communication, to a very decentralised nature of operations. Units were spread over large areas and long distances in the Gulf. Indeed that itself was interesting because the Army Staff College are currently looking with renewed emphasis on manoeuvre warfare and the less dense battlefield.

It must be said that discipline in the Gulf was very good indeed. Many people have said this was because of the lack of alcohol and that certainly had a part to play, but it also was because there was nothing else to do there. There was sand, sand and sand. It is very difficult to go and beat up the town if there is no town to beat up. There were no women to chase, so people were thrown back into the resources of formed units. There was only one court martial. So overall morale was high, especially as people became familiar with what was going on, and with the terrain and the task that was set in front of them.

However, as always, and in all organisations, there were one or two unsavoury episodes, such as the sale of flak jackets which were in short supply at the depot, where a couple of people who should have known better were forcing soldiers to part with money for these when they were on general issue. There was an attempt by a senior officer to take a lend-lease Range Rover home with him to Germany: it was extracted from

a container at the dockside. More generally there were three major causes of friction within the Army in the desert. First was the 'them and us' syndrome with HQBF staff in Riyadh living in hotels and the officers and soldiers in the desert living in the sand. The second cause was over allowances: in Riyadh there was an allowance of £41 per day for food, on top of staying in a luxury hotel, while the soldiers in the desert were getting £3 per day for water money. Embarrassing bickering over the provision of hire cars to officers was all to do with rank and status. (This, it must be admitted, is common in all occupations particularly the commercial sector.) These combined were a major cause of friction, and one Brigade commander said his men cheered only three times in the desert: one was when the end of war was declared, one was when Riyadh had its first Scud raid and one was when allowances were stopped in Riyadh. The greed and envy of people in these situations was very disappointing.

In overall terms, attitudes changed throughout the course of the war, as one would expect. In the initial stages there was a slightly bewildered determination to do the job properly and then through a middle stage of monotony and unexciting tasks - apart from the first Scud raids which were very exciting indeed. At the end, there was increasing disquiet

about the one-sidedness of the operation, particularly brought out by the 'Highway of Death' pictures on the television. In summary, the war brought out both the very best and, in some cases, the very worst in those who participated.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL DEBATE

Operational experience is one thing, yet in a peacetime context there is inevitably a debate about the whole idea of internal values and attitudes within the Army, particularly within the officer corps. At Camberley there was recently what appeared to be a wide difference in values and attitudes between the most senior authorities of the Army and those of middle management and below. On topics such as women, combat, homosexuality, the Regimental System and other issues, there appeared to be a fundamental difference in attitude. It seems that a possible explanation centres round the graduate officers. The shift of attitude seems to have occurred roughly where the first of the graduate officer generation, which began to be recruited in strength in the late seventies, now find themselves to be; that is at full Colonel/Lieutenant Colonel level and below. There is evidence of a lack of faith by insiders in the hierarchy.

There is, of course, natural debate on all sorts of subjects in the Army and it is a matter of judgement, for instance in the regiment, as to how much debate is encouraged and where its usefulness becomes lost, due to sheer lack of knowledge or experience in younger people. While sensible hierarchical debate or discussion is necessary, real experience counts for a lot in such an institution as an Army. But there is a risk in relying alone on the hierarchical debating and discussion system. Service people are very frank and they will easily talk and debate, but bring in a senior officer from their particular career structure and, for many, the debate will be effectively stifled. Sometimes debate is extraordinarily uninhibited, such as during all ranks educational courses or in management theory and practice courses for NCOs. Much detail can be revealed in such free debate about the real, natural feelings of people and the state of morale of a unit, which might be completely unknown to the commanding officer.

At a different level, an outsider visiting the Army Staff College was indeed very surprised at the amount of free internal debate and discussion amongst young majors. They were very critical of the system, and very open to questioning the status quo and the world in general. In various seminars in which members of more senior Services Staff Colleges had taken part,

at Colonel and Brigadier level, one has found that contributions from some members of the Armed Forces were much more acute, questioning and more aware of what was happening outside their organisation than their opposite numbers, who were largely from business and commerce. The brain is rather like the heart: it goes where it is appreciated. And if brains are appreciated in the Army, there will be success in attracting brains. But this freedom of expression is internal, and there are some who still are frightened by debate.

On the matter of increasing external debate about original ideas and who is allowed to have them, the rules on serving officers' freedom of expression, both in print and orally, is extremely stifling. Articles have either been withdrawn or suppressed even in internal documents, while the opportunity for speaking responsibly on radio on subjects an officer is well versed in has been denied. Even a journal such as *The British Army Review*, an in-house magazine in whose inside cover it states 'Controversy is the life blood of any professional journal', can be influenced unnecessarily by the rules. Opportunity for people with ideas to contribute substantially to the internal/ external debate is unnecessarily circumscribed. There has to be a balance since there cannot, of course, be unrestrained openness. As the Armed Services have enemies to deter and if

necessary fight against, there has to be the legal constraint controlling what can be discussed directly with the public and for good security reasons.

Of course the Army is different because it is a special kind of institution. Yet if one always goes on thinking one is so special, the opportunity for developmental thinking is greatly diminished and any lateral thinking is eschewed. The Army is not alone and, to put this into perspective, young graduate intellectuals in the age group twenty-five to thirty-five find that the hierarchy in many organisations is unacceptable. This is not an uncommon trait in the professions either, and all codes everywhere are now under increasing pressure from both within and without.

With regard to the question of moral attitudes towards such topics as adultery, homosexuality etc, society's attitudes too have changed enormously. What was conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline in 1966 is not the same in 1996. And, equally, the lack of clarity has resulted in a number of GOCs and commanders issuing 'formal' letters, in an attempt to give guidance to officers and soldiers where there is uncertainty. For example, males being in females' rooms having a coffee, as one would in one's sitting room, suddenly becomes a

big issue of 'conduct'. Can there be a legal charge framed in the terms of, essentially, an 'informal' letter from the commander? In civilian life there is no matter at issue. That having been said, the ambiguities of such situations persist: there is the real problem of permissive sexual relations across the ranks having the effect of diminishing or destroying the integrity of leadership and trust.

Homosexuals, for instance, were debarred from membership of the Diplomatic Service until about five years ago. That bar has now been lifted, but there were very good reasons for having it, chiefly in regard to security and blackmail. And take the rash of leaking of information from the Civil Service: that simply did not happen before. Now no discussion in Whitehall, even in the Cabinet, can be sure of being regarded as confidential.

Not having faith in the hierarchy and finding debate stifled in the modern British Army contrasts interestingly with a much more hierarchical system - the old Soviet Army. They had discovered that, if you had a hierarchical system where decisions came entirely from the top and filtered down, the whole thing came to a grinding halt if you didn't encourage everybody to produce ideas loyally. So they had umpteen open

press documents, where in fact the road to getting noticed in the Soviet Army was to write articles that were critical. Thus paradoxically there was much more open debate in that very closed hierarchical society, where everybody could read what the young officers were thinking. British officers working with Soviet officers of the GRU were told that they had no way or opportunity ever to find out what British officers thought.

So the two contradictory notions of 'the need to explain' and 'constraints on debate', create a tension that is now absolutely central to any organisation. One reason why these contrary factors are so important is that society has become increasingly fragmented, and many practices formerly performed by schools or within families do not now take place. In particular, there is frequently no explicit instruction in 'values'. One result is that by the time they enter University many students have no understanding of values, the ways they are exemplified, or their sanctions and rewards. This example may suggest that the Army is mistaken in looking too introspectively for reform. Aristotle always insisted that to establish the uniqueness of something, it was necessary to compare it with something else: merely staring at a thing is a totally inadequate way of finding out all its peculiarities - whether they are virtues or vices. Moreover, the relations in which one thing stands to

another may be as important as the observable characteristics themselves. It is fatal for any institution to confuse questioning with subversion - countless institutions have done so, with dire results. To question is not to challenge; to challenge is not to deny. These are the very requirements of thought.

DISCIPLINE AND MILITARY JUSTICE

The question raised earlier needs to be addressed - whether the code of discipline necessarily demands that the Army, or any of the Services, should have the right to exercise jurisdiction over civil criminal cases through the Courts Martial system. There has been criticism voiced by the European Commission about the system being subject to the Chain of Command and therefore court proceedings not wholly independent. That is not to say that individual officers of the courts have not been fair or just, or that the legal advice of Judge Advocates has not been of the best. The trying of officers, soldiers and service dependents in overseas garrisons on criminal charges is particularly questionable, even if practicalities, such as the travel of counsel and witnesses, are taken into account. Hitherto, Courts-Martial have been automatically staged in the overseas country, in accordance with the Army's code of discipline.

It must not be overlooked that minor military offences, which are currently tried under summary jurisdiction procedures by COs and company commanders, are an important part of the military code of discipline. There is very rarely any question of whether the offence has been committed, or the requirement to determine whether the accused is 'guilty' or 'not guilty'; the cases are usually very simple and clear cut. The questions then are usually of degree, mitigating circumstances and appropriate punishment. The parallels with civilian organisations are also clear, since most companies have a code of discipline too. In industry there is the added necessity of codifying everything, so that it is absolutely clear what the offence is, what the warnings are and what the punishment is.

The question of whether subalterns and soldiers understand an offence against the military code to be a crime, is a very important consideration. It can be a matter argued on a crucial internal values basis. The distinction, however, is one of contract, and there is an immediate difficulty because there is no clear cut contract in military service. In addition to contractual issues, there is legislation to the effect that an employer can breach a contract if an officer's conduct is judged by three or five of his peers to have fallen below a perceived standard. There is no equivalent crime in civilian employment.

There is an inherent ambiguity about many 'military offences'. That is the distinction which, at the moment, makes the military rather different. 'Conduct unbecoming an officer' is a particularly difficult matter, when at the same time as the Army Board judges certain behaviour to be unacceptable, it is accused of making 'moral and social judgements'.

Despite all these practical, legal and contractual difficulties, it must be said that the Army is getting dangerously close to being frightened to do what might actually be right. There are not dissimilar problems in industry. If one of the directors of a company, or a senior manager, wrote to the papers about some internal matter, or broke some code of understanding, he would be out of the door in a flash. If he chose to sue, that is a very secondary consideration to actually getting rid of a problem. There must be a balance somewhere, and the Army should not be too coy about it.

[Editor's footnote: As announced at the Adjutant General's Conference in London on 16 April, some of the Court-Martial and redress of complaints procedures have been modified.]

VALUE OF SOLDIER TO SOCIETY

MILITARY BEST PRACTICE

Britain has always liked to regard itself as the least military of nations and able to put away its symbols of war as soon as peace is declared. The formal links between politicians and military men in the Services have always been slender, with a few exceptions. While many politicians have done military service, they discarded their rank quickly. The Armed Forces have maintained their status with the general public while recently other professions, notably the Police and Judges, have lost it. The country is still proud of its Armed Forces, as they have nearly always won their wars, and the Falklands and Gulf wars have brought them new glory. There is no conscription, of course, and the Continental nations are having second thoughts about it. Having no conscription does remove the Armed Forces further from public view and so enhances their prestige, but the nation has to ask itself how far it nurtures, encourages and rewards the volunteer soldier.

It must be said that the value of the Army over the last few decades has been as a model of good practice to civilian life in various fields; leadership and management training, for

example. The Regular Commissions Board's practices have been widely copied by other organisations for assessing the qualities needed by, or most appreciated by, future employers of young persons. The Army had a significant influence on training for leadership and effective management in commercial and industrial firms. The influence has spread from Sandhurst's Rowallan Company, Warminster platoon commanders' courses and the Staff Colleges' courses, to firms and commercial organisations which had previously been very suspicious of the idea of personal development and leadership training. The management training manuals of a large number of firms reflect the principles of John Adair's Sandhurst based Action Centred Leadership. Many aspects of Army training and personal development have been adapted to civilian conditions and they can be seen from Marks and Spencer, to Esso and the City.

Soldiers too have on the whole been more adaptable to change, as a result of their training, than most factory workers. The shop floor leadership of the Army is undoubtedly far better than in very many civilian firms. One company where the shop floor leadership has always been good, is Marks and Spencer, with an impressive record of good human relations. There is more Army leadership and team work language in their manual than anywhere else and they are as authoritarian as the Army.

An employee is treated very well by M & S, but you do what you are told and if you don't, you are out. If you are told to relocate, you relocate immediately.

There is certainly plenty of evidence of how useful officers trained by the Army in leadership and command can be when they leave the Forces. Ex Officers can apply management skills, leadership skills and the kind of structures that are needed, for instance, in an emergency situation. The greater confidence engendered all round encourages funding authorities such as the UN and ODA to release generous grants.

Charities sorely lack the kind of positive management skills which the best Army officers have acquired through training and experience. An injection of command competence would do an enormous amount for the community, and it would also do an enormous amount for the Army too in the shape of public relations. Again in recruitment, good practice shown by the Military is evident. The system of Schools Liaison Officers is a model for other institutions to follow, at a time when industry is saying 'we are not getting enough able recruits'. This model system has been ignored by industry.

Carl von Clausewitz said it was fruitful to compare war

with business competition, where there is a similar conflict of human interests and activities but without the bloodshed. Industry and the Armed Forces have a lot to learn from each other. Officers should actively and routinely study civil organisations, and the Army should formally encourage many more industrial attachments. There is so much civilian management can learn from the Army, and officers and soldiers on leaving contribute to civilian management effectively but quietly.

MORAL AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

A particular feature of modern-day operations is the weight of moral responsibility that is seen to be placed on non-commissioned officers and soldiers. As a result of the requirements of supporting the police in Ulster and now in peacekeeping duties in the former Yugoslavia, the private soldier has to make judgements which in a previous generation, an officer would be on hand to make. Comparisons with the duties and responsibilities of police constables can be drawn, and it is for debate that the standing of the private soldier should be enhanced and be rewarded accordingly.

The police sometimes have a degree of independence that is worrying, although even the police are on the end of a radio if in doubt. Most traditional private soldiers would not be capable of handling it. While this may be so in individual cases and it is very important to protect the Private Cleggs of the future, arguably the most important man who has got the greatest operational freedom that actually makes the difference on the street comer, is the man who commands the brick, not the man who is actually carrying the rifle. It is the same as the man who is actually in charge of the police car, not the man who is actually on the beat. One of the strengths of the Army has always been its training and the value it has placed on the NCO and the concentration should be much more on enhancing his training and his value. With regard to Police Force and Army comparisons, there was a time when the absolute loyalty of the police had actually to be 'bought'. (The Police also earn overtime for extra hours spent on duty.) The question of buying the loyalty of the Services may now be a relevant consideration, but for different reasons - to prove that civilians value the soldier.

In moral terms, it is important to draw a distinction between the 'role' of the Army and its 'tasks'. The concept of 'role' is primarily a moral or evaluative concept. The concept of a 'task' consists in a job with determinate boundaries and

definite criteria for deciding how far it is being achieved and whether or not it is being done. It is one thing for soldiers to be employed on tasks which have some similarity with Police activities. But if it were to be suggested that the Army had a role similar to that of the Police, one should be very uneasy indeed. For one reason alone, it would reduce the requirement of politicians to distinguish very clearly between the activity of the Police Forces of this country and the activities of the military. The SAS attack on the Iranian Embassy was a good example: there was a point in time where a political decision was made that police activity was no longer appropriate and a distinct decision was made to hand over to something bigger and more powerful. At many times in Northern Ireland this question has had to be answered before practical action could be taken. Bosnia is a role for the Army because it is 'military peace enforcement', incurring a range of tasks, some of which will have some similarity with those of a police force. These intellectual and moral distinctions are relevant to the perceptions of the young, thinking recruits attracted to the modern-day Army.

TRADITION OF PUBLIC SERVICE

On the subject of less tangible matters, the figure of the soldier can and often does embody the ideal of service - doing

one's duty despite danger, discomfort and personal inconvenience. This of course, if it can be put over in the right way, is a very valuable role model for some young, especially compared with today's many cult idols. The glory of the Falklands is fading now and the dust of the Gulf War has settled: but there is still a well of respect in this country for the Armed Forces and the virtues they embody. In particular there is immense respect for the discipline and restraint shown in Ulster and in Bosnia.

There are trends in society, however, which cannot be denied - the egalitarian outlook, and the increased desire for public accountability and public scrutiny at all levels. There is a question of 'will the Army be able to attract sufficient talent and some of the best brains to maintain its standards?' On one hand, the Army goes out of its way to attract high quality, yet on the other hand the structure of that officer corps is such that you need a high rate of natural wastage at the bottom level. There is the continual haemorrhage of officer ability just before the Staff College stage. The slope of pyramid is very steep and both in the Regular Army and in the Territorial Army, the officer wastage rates are very similar.

Many aspects of what being an officer is all about, are

intangible. The idea that somebody once they have been formed and trained as an officer is always an officer and available for the State and society is sadly wholly ignored. If one of the missions of the Army is the ability to be able to deter, the ability to be able to reconstitute quickly will enhance the credibility of deterring the possibility of general war. Come the day, the element that the Army will lack is sufficient officers. The idea of the perpetual or renewable commission is a powerful one; and since those ex-officers working in civilian life are still acting as 'staff officers' or 'commanders' by any other name, why does the Army take the view that the only place that it can find officers and soldiers when it is reconstituting, is from within itself? It never has in the past.

It is unlikely that the British Army will ever mount a Falklands scale operation alone. That having been said, just before the Falklands War, the exercise that practised almost exactly that war, had just been dropped from the Staff College syllabus on the grounds that Britain would never do it again. Yet the days of massed regular or citizen armies are clearly out of fashion, given the modern firepower and speed of operations. If nations go to war they will be in some sort of coalition, either a Euro Corps, NATO or a new Atlantic alliance. There will be increasing pressures on the Army to adapt its thinking towards

other armies and their different cultures and not ignore large-scale general war planning and training.

But in looking at how the history and future of war affects young people, many simply have no concept or interest in war at all. It is necessary to be very wary of the Army providing role models to society, because if one were to go down to Tesco's and speak to the young people who are buying their rice and sugar, they would actually laugh if you started talking about 'service and pride' and 'duty and self sacrifice'. What they talk about is 'self', being 'laid-back', 'its cool to be cool' etc. It is very difficult to get people to step out of line, and peer group pressure dominates their lives.

That having been said, one should not, however, assume that society is going to stand still. There is a move for education to go back to teaching values and the three Rs, and wearing school uniforms, because various progressive ideas have not worked. Therefore the Armed Services, which try to sustain a series of values and adapt these values to changing conditions, provide exemplars for society which could be moving back towards them rather than away from them. There is a balance between standing firm on values and not being over reactionary. Current fashions of thought, and pressure group politics must

not be mistaken for the true values of society.

Professor Anthony O'Hare, Professor of Philosophy at Bradford, writing on our military traditions, argues that these traditions derive ultimately from Aristotle. After all in Athens in Aristotle's day, the right to vote went with a duty to fight. Socrates did his military service. This perhaps should be an essential requirement for any professor of philosophy! The thesis of Anthony O'Hare went something like this:

> 'Many people claim that there is a lack of sense of community in our society. How can a sense of community be produced without the military virtue such as order, self-respect, pride, smartness, discipline, readiness for self-sacrifice and for a necessary ruthlessness against a ruthless enemy? There can be no community without an instinctive feeling for self-respect: which values to salute, which manners to adopt, and when to defer to whom. Further, a country whose subjects do not have a sense of pride in their nation is unlikely to inspire feelings of co-operation and harmony among its people. These are the virtues and feelings central to military tradition. The problem today is that the worlds of education and art align 'military tradition'

with jingoism. They try to demolish it and deprive the young of proper guidance.'

An injection of the ideal military values into society - unstructured, confused and uncertain as society is - would be no bad thing.

At times in their history, some Continental nations have deemed their conscript Armies contributed to citizenship training, the university of the nation. They are, however, finding that conscription is difficult to sustain and they are revising their ideas and coming round to the idea of small professional armies. Voluntary national service is a powerful but unarticulated concept, and it should not be mistaken for old style conscription. The Army's position as an institution which personifies and exemplifies public service and the highest standards should not be and probably is not undervalued.

But even then there is danger: the Army can do much by example in setting standards for civilians, but cannot turn itself into moral philosophers. The idea that individual servicemen and service parents live on some singularly high moral plane is not sensible, as they are really just the same cross-representation of sinners as the rest of society in their personal behaviour. The Corporals Mess should not be the home and

authority of the high ground of morality. Self-discipline, probably, sums it all up, since the self-disciplined person in many ways subscribes to conventional teaching of morality and values.

In a future world where anything is possible the Army may sink into military ineffectiveness, or it may become so convinced of its own righteousness that it is tempted to impose its own values and ideas on society. Politicians today are at about their lowest ebb of public regard. To have your politicians so lowly regarded and juxtaposed with obviously impressive leaders in the military, particularly on television, has its own social dangers. This is a very important issue and is a reminder of the principle of the apolitical 'professional soldier', a notion of common currency fortunately well understood both inside the Army and externally. Fortunately these extreme positions are unlikely.

A fully understanding relationship between all officers/soldiers and civilians, and vice versa, is crucial to the Army's right to be different and its effectiveness as a fighting force. The public too must give faithful support to its Army. Perhaps in many ways the current problem is not the fact that outsiders do not understand the Army, it is the fact that the

Army does not really understand society. Every Commanding Officer has an obligation to train up young people to certain standards. How much of that has been orientated towards understanding the mores, values and occupations of general society is difficult to say. What efforts by the Military will be made to redress that imbalance remains to be seen. The onus of understanding and action must lie with the Army.

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