



S M D C / A R S T R A T
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Last month I started a discussion on Army values and their importance to the men and women who chose to serve our great nation as members of the United States Army. **LDRSHIP**, the acronym we use to remind ourselves of our Army Values provides the platform for our continued discussion. The second letter “**D**” is there to remind us of the critical importance of always doing our duty. Army Field Manual 6-22 defines duty. **DUTY: Fulfill your obligations.**

Fulfill your obligations... A simple enough definition, but what does it mean? Do I fulfill my obligations by showing up for duty each day and putting in eight hours? Are my obligations met when I do enough to keep the Boss / Sergeant / Captain / GS-13 off my back? I meet my suspenses and I work myself back into good enough shape to pass my fitness test twice each year, does that fulfill my obligations?

As noted in FM 6-22, “duty extends beyond everything required by law, regulation, and orders.” I’m reminded of a commercial the NFL used to run showing players running the same drill over and over again. The message behind the drill was simple, “amateurs practice until they get it right, and professionals practice until they can’t do it wrong.” As Army professionals, we must always strive for more than meeting minimum standards for performance. Doing our duty as Army professionals, demands that we always try to do our very best. Army Soldiers and Civilians must be committed to excellence in all aspects of their duty—we must strive to be the very best in our profession.

The Army’s approach to fighting is through the use of “centralized control and decentralized execution.” Simply put, this means stating the objective or goal and allowing our Soldiers and Civilians determine the best way to meet it. This approach has been successfully used to wage and win wars since our country was founded. It works because the Army expects its members to use initiative.

A key part of fulfilling duty is to exercise initiative—anticipating what needs to be done without being told. Exercising initiative means meeting the purpose, not just the letter, of the tasks assigned or the orders received. No task is complete until the intended outcome is achieved. FM 6-22 gives an excellent example: “When a platoon sergeant tells a squad leader to inspect weapons, the squad leader only fulfills a minimum obligation when checking weapons. If the squad leader finds weapons that are not clean or serviced, a sense of duty alerts the leader to go beyond the platoon sergeant’s instructions. To fulfill that duty, squad leaders must correct the problem and ensure that all the unit’s weapons are up to standard. When leaders take initiative, they also take full responsibility for their actions and those of their subordinates.”

Being conscientious is a human trait. A conscientious person has internalized a strong sense of duty. From the Army’s perspective, being conscientious means having a high sense of responsibility for your personal contributions to the Army, and demonstrating this sense of “duty” through dedicated effort, organization, thoroughness, reliability, and practicality. A conscientious Soldier or Civilian will do what’s right—even when tired or against overwhelming odds.

So, fulfilling your obligations means doing your very best at every task, taking the initiative, and being conscientious.

Embracing the Army value of Duty is critical to mission success and is a fundamental building block in our never-ending quest to remain professional Soldiers and Civilians, carrying out our sworn duty to defend and protect the Constitution of the United States of America.

SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!