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For the past several months, I've been talking about Army values and their importance to the men and women who serve as members of the United States Army. This month, we come to the letter H in the acronym "LDRSHIP." **H** is there to remind us of the importance of honor as a core Army Value and I believe as a yardstick for measuring our actions in life. According to the Roman philosopher Cicero, *"Ability without honor is useless."*

Army Field Manual 6-22 defines honor: **Living Up to All the Army Values** – a tall order, but one that is expected from the men and women who serve our great nation as Soldiers and Civilians in the United States Army.

As noted in FM 6-22, "Honor is the glue that holds Army values together. Honor requires a person to demonstrate continuously an understanding of what is right. It implies taking pride in the community's acknowledgment of that reputation. Military ceremonies recognizing individual and unit achievements demonstrate and reinforce the importance the Army places on honor."

I believe it's important to point out that being honorable has absolutely nothing to do with being prideful. Webster's defines pride as *the quality or state of being proud* and further goes on to provide the synonyms of proud: *Arrogant, Haughty, Lordly, Insolent, Overbearing, Supercilious, Disdainful* – all qualities that we neither want nor need in our Soldiers.

Don't misunderstand my meaning here. There is absolutely nothing wrong with feeling pride at individual accomplishments or pride in the accomplishments or history of an organization or unit. The Army strives to instill a healthy amount of pride and respect into each and every member of our proud organization. So what's wrong with pride?

As long as pride does not get in the way of judgment or cause rash action, there is nothing wrong with a strong sense of pride. Just keep in mind that *"In general, pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes"* – John Ruskin.

We must never, ever confuse wounded pride with loss of honor. If we live long enough, all of us will eventually experience the distasteful feeling of having our pride wounded. The source of this experience may come from being bested in individual competition or through public embarrassment or humiliation. Whatever the source, we must remember that this loss of pride does not make us less honorable, and we cannot use honor as an excuse for brash or dishonorable actions.

Honor is not an excuse. Honor provides the "moral compass" that must guide the lives and actions of the Soldiers and Civilians who serve America as members of the Army. We must all continually strive to be honorable, to be recognized – individually and as members of the Army – as possessing the traits and strengths of an honorable person. We earn this recognition by always placing Army values above self-interest and before career advancement or other forms of personal gain. As Calvin Coolidge once said, *"No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave."*

As we continue to fight in this era of persistent conflict, it's more important than ever for the Army to maintain the public's trust and respect. Doing so means acting with honor. *"War must be carried on systematically, and to do it you must have men of character activated by principles of honor"* – George Washington.

In closing, I'll leave you with this thought. It is not coincidence that our highest award is the "Medal of Honor." Its recipients clearly go beyond the expected and beyond the call of duty.

SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!