



**S M D C / A R S T R A T**  
Headquartered on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama



**CSM Eagle Column**  
**September/October 2008**

This month, we continue our discussion of Army values and their importance to the men and women who serve as members of the United States Army, and to the civilians who support them. As we come to the letter "I," we've almost reached the end of the acronym "LDRSHIP." "I" reminds us of the importance of integrity as a core Army Value. "Integrity is not a 90 percent thing, not a 95 percent thing; either you have it or you don't." — Peter Scotese.

Army Field Manual 6-22 defines integrity: Do what's right – legally and morally.

As noted in FM 6-22, the Army expects us to "consistently act according to clear principles, not just what works now." This means clearly understanding the difference between right and wrong and always choosing to do the right thing – not only the easy thing, the popular thing, or the less painful thing. Integrity is a critical Army Value because it is the cornerstone, the foundation upon which trust and respect are built. Without trust and respect, the Army cannot effectively function as a unit and it definitely cannot honorably represent our great Nation.

Think about it, as an individual do you do business with or socialize with people you do not trust and respect? No one is comfortable around people or establishments of questionable integrity. No one wants to deal with people or companies they do not trust or respect. This fact is especially true in the Army, where we must routinely place our well-being into the hands of our fellow Soldiers and civilians, and where other countries continually measure the integrity of the United States of America based upon our actions. Unit morale and unit effectiveness require trust and respect, without them the unit is doomed to failure.

As Warren Buffett once said, "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it." As a command we cannot function effectively with a tarnished reputation. As an individual, you will find it extremely difficult to be an effective member of the Army or a respected member of the community if you have a bad reputation. I can guarantee you that a person of questionable integrity is going to have a poor reputation. You cannot deviate from the path of "doing what's right" and maintain your integrity.

The words situation or context or circumstance have nothing to do with "doing what's right," there are no shades of gray. Your actions are both legally and morally right or they are not. For a person of integrity the situation, context, or circumstance surrounding an event will not influence the correct response. If your unit is "almost" up to standards, you won't report that it meets the required operational readiness. If most of your personnel have completed required training and you think you can slip the rest in at a later date, you won't report 100 percent compliance. A person of integrity reports the situation as it is, and proposes a plan to meet the required level when he or she is not in compliance.

In order to maintain trust and respect and to develop and maintain a good reputation, we must have integrity. The integrity of each individual within the Army helps shape the trust and respect people feel toward our Army, and ultimately toward our nation. Men and women of integrity will always respond honestly, no matter the personal cost. Our Army demands it and our nation depends upon it.

***SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!***