

I AM AN AMERICAN FIGHTING MAN

In December 1955, the President of the United States issued an Executive Order prescribing a "Code of Conduct for members of the Armed Forces of the United States." All members of the Army have been informed of the meaning of this Code, and it will continue to be an important subject in the Army's training programs.

This *Troop Topic* does not review the Code in detail, although it is reprinted here in full on pages 16, 17, and 18. The purpose of this pamphlet is to emphasize a single point: *The Code of Conduct is new, but the ideas in it have guided American fighting men all through our Country's history.*

Why a Code of Conduct?

If the ideas in the Code of Conduct have always been understood and supported, why was it necessary to issue them as an official order by the President? Was it because today's soldiers don't understand these ideas as clearly as soldiers of long ago? What is the practical value of putting the ideas into standard form? Let's consider this question "Why do we have a Code of Conduct?" before we take up the deeper meaning of the Code itself.

When you first came into the Army, you began to learn many basic military facts and skills. They were new facts and skills for the most part, but not very hard to understand. One group of military ideas you learned was called the "General Orders for interior guard." You probably memorized them word for word. Even if you have forgotten the exact wording, you remember the ideas. They are not difficult ideas. Most soldiers, after very little training, would probably behave properly on guard duty even if they had never learned a set of rules called the "General Orders." That's because the ideas in these orders are simply common sense rules covering specific situations. For example, a soldier who was guarding some government property wouldn't let it be stolen merely because he had never memorized the order: "To take charge of this post and all Government property in view." His common sense would tell him this was wrong. Why, then, does the Army require every soldier to memorize a set of words called the "General Orders?" For three reasons.

First, to give him *specific* and *clear* ideas about his duty as a sentinel.

Second, to make sure that *all* soldiers, not just most, will know the rules.

Third, to make it easier to remember the rules, so that when actually on guard duty or when under stress soldiers will be able to do the right thing *automatically* without having to think out each step.

These are exactly the same reasons why we now have a Code of Conduct. The Code takes several familiar old ideas and puts them into language that is specific and clear. This enables all members of our Armed Forces to be guided by a single standard official statement of their fundamental duties as fighting men. Just as all soldiers learn the same rules about interior guard duty, they now learn these rules of general conduct.

A soldier who learns the Code of Conduct and understands what it means need never be confused or doubtful of what his duty is in certain military situations. The Code answers those questions before he ever faces an emergency in which he has to decide what his duty is. It tells him what is right and what is wrong, what he must and must not do in specified military situations.

As we consider the meaning of the Code of Conduct, keep in mind this main thought: *The Code is new but the ideas in it are as old as our Country.*

The Key to the Code

The First and Sixth Articles of the Code (see pages 16 and 18), considered together, can be called the key to the Code. They add up to a definition of what an American fighting man *believes*; the other four Articles tell what he stands ready to *do* because of what he believes. Only when a soldier *believes* in the ideas of Articles I and VI does he have the moral basis for *acting* on the specific rules stated in Articles II, III, IV, and V.

The final sentence of Article I reminds Americans of a famous incident in our history. In one sense the author of Article I was a 21-year-old Captain in the Continental Army of George Washington. This young officer, while on a spying mission behind the British lines on Long Island, was captured by the enemy and sentenced to death. On September 21, 1776, he spoke his last words—words that deeply impressed his executioners; words that have come ringing down the years. Whenever you think of Article I of the Code, remember young Captain Nathan Hale. Picture him standing on the gallows, taking his last look at the land he loved. Then listen carefully to his last words, for he was speaking to you and all American fighting men: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

Valley of Decision

About a year after Nathan Hale died for his country, several thousand American fighting men also helped to write our Code of

Conduct. They did it by deeds that still inspire Americans as much as any words.

The time: Winter. The Place: An encampment near Philadelphia. The name: Valley Forge. Aside from General Washington and his staff, few of the fighting men who spent that terrible winter are now remembered as individuals. Instead, we remember them as a group, a band of fearless and determined Americans. Their names no longer matter; what will always matter is their loyalty, their willingness to endure the agonies of bitter cold, hunger, disease.

Why did they stay? It would have been easy to go home, as in fact many did. Those who stayed also knew that their families needed them back home. They knew that when the long bitter winter was over, the fighting would begin once more. They knew that many of their fellow Americans were not supporting the struggle for independence. Few if any of them could describe the kind of government they preferred. They did not know what would happen if the rebellion succeeded, but they were pretty sure what their fate would be if it failed.

From every point of view the odds were against them. Yet they stayed. What kept them there was loyalty. For the moment, it was loyalty to their leader, General Washington. If he stayed, they would stay. He seemed to believe in the struggle, so they believed in it too. If in his mind there was a vision of a better future, they did not ask what the vision was; they knew it would include them, and they did not need any promises or guarantees.

Their confidence in George Washington would one day become the foundation of their faith in the new way of government he would help to create. But right now, in this winter of 1777, he was

not yet the "Father of his Country." Here at Valley Forge the men stayed because General Washington wanted them to stay. Each man's decision to stay was proof that he believed in something: his leader, his God, and in the idea of something they would later call the United States of America.

O Thus Be It Ever When Free Men Shall Stand

On the night of September 13, 1814, the fortunes of the United States of America were at a low ebb. Three weeks earlier, British troops had marched unopposed into Washington, D. C., and set fire to the Capitol building, the White House, the Treasury building, the Department of State, and private buildings and homes.

It seemed to many Americans that their Country's independence, so bravely declared less than 40 years before, would soon be lost. From the ruins of Washington, the British next moved toward the vital seaport of Baltimore.

But the land and water approaches to Baltimore were well defended. Maryland militia delayed the British land attack, while in the city's harbor the soldiers of Fort McHenry refused to give up under the heavy bombardment from British warships.

From a British vessel a young U. S. attorney watched the battle. He had boarded the enemy ship earlier that day to represent the United States in negotiations for the release of a Baltimore citizen being held prisoner.

The brave defense of Fort McHenry moved him deeply. On the way back to Baltimore the next morning, he began to write a poem. He had no idea that he was creating a place for himself in American history. Nor could he know that he was putting down thoughts that generations of American children would memorize, or ideas that would one day be expressed in a Code of Conduct.

His poem, first printed in a Baltimore newspaper, and soon afterward set to music, was instantly popular. Within a few years, our Army and Navy were regularly using it as an unofficial national anthem. A century later, in 1916, President Wilson made it official and Congress confirmed his Executive Order in 1931.

Whenever you stand retreat, or rise to sing the *Star Spangled Banner* at some public event, think of Francis Scott Key, the young Baltimore lawyer whose only successful attempt at poetry became his Country's national anthem. Think also of the American fighting men whose stubborn bravery inspired its composition.

Duty, Honor, Country

Late in 1847, the military career of General Winfield Scott reached its highest moment. The victories of his well-trained and high-spirited Army at Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, and Chapul-

tepec had brought the war with Mexico to a close. Scott and his Army were now occupying Mexico City to govern the country pending the signing of a peace treaty. Thirty-five years earlier, Scott had been an outstanding young combat leader in the War of 1812, and he was destined to be the Army's senior active officer at the beginning of the Civil War in 1861.

But now in Mexico City, in his hour of greatest fame and prestige, shocking news arrived from his Commander-in-Chief in Washington. Political feuds and ugly personal jealousies of long standing had finally boiled over—the President was summoning General Scott to face a court of inquiry. There is no room here to discuss the charges against him—except to say that history has long ago proven them entirely false and malicious.

Then, at a moment when his honor and professional fitness were being publicly questioned at home, General Scott received an impressive vote of confidence from another source. A group of Mexican leaders, who hoped that their country would some day be annexed to the United States, asked General Scott to form and lead a new Mexican government. Besides the presidential salary, Scott was to receive immediately a payment of one and a quarter million dollars.

We do not know how much thought Scott gave to the offer. Even aside from the vast sum of money, the idea had much to recommend it. Under the circumstances, he could have resigned from the United States Army under officially honorable conditions. He knew that many of his best officers would probably be eager to follow his lead and serve under him in the forces of Mexico. Thousands of his soldiers, when their enlistments expired, would undoubtedly be happy to sign for Mexican service. He had every reason to believe that he could succeed in the high office being offered him.

But General Scott flatly refused the offer. He had decided to come home and face the court of inquiry—even though the result might be national disgrace and the end of his long military career. As he later wrote to a close friend, “If I failed to return home and face my enemies, I should have been condemned as guilty of all their foul charges.”

Personal honor meant more to General Scott than all the money and power that might have come to him. In the end, his refusal to run away paid off. In the eyes of the American people, it was his enemies, not General Scott, whose honor was called into question. The court of inquiry dropped all charges against him. In a few years he found himself once more in command of the Army he loved and had served so well.

Whenever you face a situation involving your personal honor or responsibility as a soldier, it might help to remember this illustrious American fighting man, General Winfield Scott.

Fighting Men of the Old West

Ever since movies were invented, there have been “horse operas,” and now we have them on TV too. And long before movies or TV, millions of Americans read western stories and novels; many of us still enjoy them.

Many of these exciting tales of the Old West are pretty corny. We know that the hero is going to beat the villain to the draw or otherwise stop his evil designs; if there’s a gang of rustlers, our hero will round them up; and if hostile “Injuns” are in the vicinity, we know they are going to “bite the dust” eventually.

Much as we might smile at some of these tired old story plots, we should always remember that the Old West really did exist, and that American soldiers played a leading part in winning it for the United States. Altogether the job took more than 100 years, from the Indian troubles in the Ohio Country in the 1790’s until the early years of our own Century, when the last of the Western Territories were admitted to the Union.

The U. S. Army’s tradition of rugged self-reliance and ability to handle any kind of job was formed during these eventful years. Consider, for example, this achievement of a mounted regiment. Setting

out from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, it marched overland to Oregon, covering more than 2,000 miles in 5 months. Two years later it made an even longer march from Oregon to Texas.

Between 1865 and 1898, U. S. Army fighting men took part in 943 engagements against hostile Indians. These ranged from brief skirmishes to full-scale battles. A total of 416 fighting men received the Medal of Honor for deeds of outstanding valor in these campaigns. Let's take at random the official citation of one of these frontier fighters: "Corporal Charles A. Bessey, Company A, 3d United States Cavalry; near Elkhorn Creek, Wyoming, 13 January 1877. *Citation*—While scouting with 4 men and attacked in ambush by 14 hostile Indians, held his ground, 2 of his men being wounded, and kept up the fight until himself wounded in the side, and then went to the assistance of his wounded comrades."

Corporal Bessey's personal code of conduct was remarkably like the one all fighting men learn today. Chances are he never tried to put it into words, but his actions speak louder than words. Take another look at his citation; then consider these words of our official Code: "I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command, I will never surrender my men while they still have the means to resist."

"Greater Love Hath No Man . . ."

One of the most heroic deeds by American fighting men occurred in Cuba in 1900. It involved no enemy action and no war—except man's endless war of science against disease. The incident began when 4 American medical officers, headed by Major Walter Reed, went to Cuba to seek the cause and possible cure for the dreaded scourge of Yellow Fever

The secret of this plague had been sought for centuries, but all previous theories had proved false. The 4 Americans soon had reason to agree with a famous Cuban doctor, who had studied the problem and believed that Yellow Fever probably was passed from person to person by the bite of a particular kind of mosquito. The big question was—how to prove this theory. Until it *was* proved, no full-scale measures of prevention and control could be taken.

A call went out for volunteers. It was soon answered by an Army surgeon, a Coast Artillery sergeant, a private of the 7th Cavalry, a private of the 2d Artillery, an American civilian living in Cuba, and 13 Army Hospital Corpsmen. These men, plus the 4 medical officers in charge of the study, all agreed to risk their lives in what eventually proved to be one of the most important scientific experiments in history.

Some of the men allowed themselves to be bitten by mosquitos which had first bitten Yellow Fever patients. Several others were inoculated with blood serum drawn from other fever patients. The remaining members of the group were assigned to use the bedding and clothing of Yellow Fever victims, to determine whether the infection could be spread by that means.

Fifteen of the men contracted Yellow Fever; two of the 15 died. All 15 had either been bitten by the test mosquitos or inoculated with the serum.

The theory that the disease was spread by mosquitos was now proved. The campaign to wipe it out could begin. Within a few years, Yellow Fever had practically disappeared. It has been estimated that the victory over this plague has saved millions of lives in the years since these gallant Americans freely risked their lives for the good of mankind.

A unique honor helps to keep alive the memory of these American fighting men. By an Act of Congress in 1929, a special gold medal was awarded each man or his next of kin. The Act further directed that a Roll of Honor containing their names and an account of their deeds would be printed in each annual issue of the *Official Army Register*. No other person or group has ever been honored in this particular manner.

It seems plain that these 22 Americans lived by a personal code even more demanding than our Official Code. Our Code defines our *duties* as American fighting men; their action was truly "above and beyond the call of duty." No one ordered them to do what they did; no one *could* have done so. Each one of them decided entirely on his own to risk his life for a great cause. Each man believed that the welfare of his fellow men was more important than his own safety. Their inspiring example helps us all to live up to the requirements of our Code of Conduct.

General Pershing's Greatest Doughboy

No tour of our Nation's Capital is really complete without a visit to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery. The American fighting man of World War I who lies there symbolizes all who gave their lives for their country. The simple inscription on the tomb has been read in hushed voice by millions of reverent visitors: "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."

The burial of the Unknown Soldier in 1920 was a memorable occasion. Representatives of many foreign countries were there to honor this unknown American with their highest decorations for valor. The Medal of Honor was bestowed by our government. The President of the United States and other high civil and military leaders were there. One of these was General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force.

Also present was a young officer who had been selected to represent the Infantry as an honorary pallbearer for the Unknown Soldier. Referring to this young officer, General Pershing said, "Here is America's greatest Doughboy." He was speaking of Lieutenant Samuel Woodfill, one of the 95 fighting men of the U. S. Army who earned the Medal of Honor in World War I. Woodfill was a Regular Army sergeant of long experience when the war began, and had been commissioned lieutenant shortly before his eventful "big day" of combat.

Like most official citations, the one that describes Woodfill's heroic deeds condenses a lot of action into the fewest possible words. Keep in mind that in this case the action extended over a period of several hours. That is one reason why many ground fighting experts

regard Woodfill's exploit as the ideal example of a trained, skillful, and efficient ground fighter. Here is what the official Medal of Honor book has to say :

SAMUEL WOODFILL

First Lieutenant, 60th Infantry, 5th Division

At Cunel, France, 12 October 1918

While leading his company against the enemy, his line came under heavy machine-gun fire, which threatened to hold up the advance. Followed by two soldiers at 25 yards, this officer went out ahead of his first line toward a machine-gun nest and worked his way around its flank, leaving the two soldiers in front. When he got within 10 yards of the gun it ceased firing, and four of the enemy appeared, three of whom were shot by Lieutenant Woodfill. The fourth, an officer, rushed at Lieutenant Woodfill, who attempted to club the officer with his rifle. After a hand-to-hand struggle, Lieutenant Woodfill killed the officer with his pistol. His company thereupon continued to advance, until shortly afterwards another machine-gun nest was encountered. Calling on his men to follow, Lieutenant Woodfill rushed ahead of his line in the face of heavy fire from the nest, and when several of the enemy appeared above the nest he shot them, capturing three other members of the crew and silencing the gun. A few minutes later, this officer for the third time demonstrated conspicuous daring by charging another machine-gun position, killing five men in one machine-gun pit with his rifle. He then drew his revolver and started to jump into the pit, when two other gunners only a few yards away turned their gun on him. Failing to kill them with his revolver, he grabbed a pick lying nearby and killed both of them. Inspired by the exceptional courage displayed by this officer, his men pressed on to their objective under severe shell and machine-gun fire.

"I Will Trust in My God . . ."

The time was early morning of February 3, 1943. The troopship *SS Dorchester* pushed through heavy seas of a North Atlantic winter. The cargo was a precious one—American fighting men. Not far away an enemy submarine commander barked an order and the *Dorchester's* fate was sealed.

As the torpedoed ship began to sink by the bow, confusion and fear threatened to spread panic among the soldiers and reduce their already small chance of rescue. But among the troops on the crowded deck were four US Army chaplains. Calmly they walked among the men, quieting their panic with words of encouragement, praying with them, and helping them into lifeboats and lifejackets.

Many survivors later told of seeing them gather around a large box of lifejackets on the forward deck and take charge of handing out jackets to those who needed them. Finally the box was empty and there were still soldiers without jackets. Quickly each chaplain removed his own lifejacket and gave it to a nearby soldier.

Moments later came the scene which survivors of the *Dorchester* will never forget. As the stricken ship made her final plunge, these four men of God were seen standing arm-in-arm, and above the roar of wind and sea their voices could be heard in prayer.

As if by Divine plan, it happens that these four First Lieutenants represented the three major religious faiths in the United States. They were: Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; John P. Washington, Roman Catholic; Clark V. Poling and George L. Fox, Protestant.

Few incidents in American history offer a more inspiring demonstration of the meaning of the final words of our Code of Conduct: *I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.*

Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

The Medal of Honor has already been mentioned several times in this pamphlet. From the Civil War period through the Korean conflict more than 2,000 fighting men of the U. S. Army have received this highest decoration for valor in combat.

The standards that govern all awards of the Medal of Honor have a definite relation to the Code of Conduct. Any action that deserves this highest decoration (or any of the lesser ones) is bound to be at the same time an action that supports the Code of Conduct. It is safe to say that no American fighting man could ever earn this medal by an action contrary to the letter or spirit of the Code.

The phrase "above and beyond the call of duty" distinguishes the Medal of Honor from all other decorations. It tells us that Medal of Honor winners, at the moment of the action, were not satisfied merely to do what is expected of *all* soldiers. Some inner spirit drove them

to do something *not* required, something they could have refrained from doing without blame or dishonor.

From the World War II list of specially honored American fighting men, let's choose a private, a staff sergeant, a captain, and a brigadier general, and see how each of them exceeded the requirements of the Code of Conduct by actions "above and beyond the call of duty."

PRIVATE RODGER W. YOUNG

148 Infantry, 37th Division. On New Georgia, Solomon Islands, 31 July 1943.

Citation: On 31 July 1943, the infantry company of which Private Young was a member was ordered to make a limited withdrawal from the battle line in order to adjust the battalion's position for the night. At this time, Private

Young's platoon was engaged with the enemy in a dense jungle where observation was very limited. The platoon suddenly was pinned down by intense fire from a Japanese machine gun concealed on higher ground only 75 yards away. The initial burst wounded Private Young. As the platoon started to obey the order to withdraw, Private Young called out that he could see the enemy emplacement, whereupon he started creeping toward it. Another burst from the machine gun wounded him the second time. Despite the wounds, he continued his heroic advance, attracting enemy fire and answering with rifle fire. When he was close enough to his objective, he began throwing hand grenades, and while doing so was hit again and killed. Private Young's bold action in closing with this Japanese pillbox and thus diverting its fire, permitted his platoon to disengage itself without loss, and was responsible for several enemy casualties.

STAFF SERGEANT ROBERT H. DIETZ

38th Armed Infantry Battalion, 7th Armored Division. At Kirchain, Germany, 29 March 1945.

Citation: He was a squad leader when the task force to which his unit was attached encountered resistance in its advance on Kirchain, Germany. Between the town's outlying buildings 300 yards distant and the stalled armored column were a minefield and two bridges defended by German rocket-launching teams and riflemen. From the town itself came heavy small-arms fire. Moving forward with his men to protect engineers while they removed the minefield and the demolition charges attached to the bridges, Sergeant Dietz came under intense fire. On his own initiative he advanced alone, scorning the bullets which struck all around him, until he was able to kill the bazooka team defending the first bridge. He continued ahead and had killed another bazooka team, bayoneted an enemy soldier armed with a panzerfaust, and shot two Germans when he was knocked to the ground by another blast of another panzerfaust. He quickly recovered, killed the man who had fired at him and then jumped into waist-deep water under the second bridge to disconnect the demolition charges. His work was completed; but as he stood up to signal that the route was clear he was killed by another enemy volley from the left flank. Sergeant Dietz by his intrepidity and valiant effort on his self-imposed mission, single-handedly opened the road for the capture of Kirchain and left with his comrades an inspiring example of gallantry in the face of formidable odds.

CAPTAIN ROBERT E. ROEDER

350th Infantry, 88th Division, Mt. Battaglia, Italy, 27-28 September 1944.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. Captain Roeder commanded his company in defense of the strategic Mt. Battaglia. Shortly after the company had occupied the hill, the Germans launched the first of a series of determined counterattacks to regain this dominating height. Completely exposed to ceaseless enemy artillery and small-arms fire, Captain Roeder constantly circulated among his men, encouraging them and directing their defense against the persistent enemy. During the sixth counterattack, the enemy, by using flamethrowers and taking advantage of the fog, succeeded in overrunning the position. Captain Roeder led his men in a fierce battle at close quarters, to repulse the attack with heavy losses to the Germans. The following morning, while the company was engaged in repulsing an enemy counterattack in force, Captain Roeder was seriously wounded and rendered unconscious by shell fragments. He was carried to the company command post, where he regained consciousness. Refusing medical treatment, he insisted on rejoining his men. Although in a weakened condition,

Captain Roeder dragged himself to the door of the command post, and picking up a rifle, braced himself in a sitting position. He began firing his weapon, shouted words of encouragement, and issued orders to his men. He personally killed two Germans before he himself was killed instantly by an exploding shell. Through Captain Roeder's able and intrepid leadership his men held Mt. Battaglia against the aggressive and fanatical enemy attempts to retake this important and strategic height. This valorous performance is exemplary of the fighting spirit of the Army of the United States.

BRIGADIER GENERAL THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR.

United States Army. Normandy Invasion, 6 June 1944.

Citation: For gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty on 6 June 1944, in France. After two verbal requests to accompany the leading assault elements in the Normandy invasion had been denied, Brigadier General Roosevelt's written request for this mission was approved and he landed with the first wave of the forces assaulting the enemy-held beaches. He repeatedly led groups from the beach, over the sea wall and established them inland. His valor, courage, and presence in the very front of the attack and his complete unconcern at being under heavy fire inspired the troops to heights of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice. Although the enemy had the beach under constant direct fire, Brigadier General Roosevelt moved from one locality to another, rallying men around him, directed and personally led them against the enemy. Under his seasoned, precise, calm, and unfaltering leadership, assault troops reduced beach strong points and rapidly moved inland with minimum casualties. He thus contributed substantially to the successful establishment of the beachhead in France.

Porkchop Hill

During the Korean conflict of 1950-53, more than 50 American fighting men earned the Medal of Honor. Thousands more earned the other decorations for valor: Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Soldier's Medal, Bronze Star Medal, and Purple Heart.

The fighting conditions in Korea were as difficult as any in the Army's long history. Despite the use of important new weapons and equipment, Korea was often described as an "old fashioned war." One of the big lessons of Korea is that the "old fashioned" individual fighting man is still the most important element of success in battle.

All but a tiny minority of our fighting men in Korea lived up to the highest standards of the Code of Conduct. Because they did so, the U. S. Eighth Army in which they served has been called the finest fighting force in American history. Because of their valor, names like Heartbreak Ridge, Old Baldy, and Porkchop Hill will live forever.

"I Will Never Forget . . ."

No one can say for sure whether, in our time or the distant future, Americans will once more be called upon to fight for our Country and its way of life. But one thing is certain: The more we remain plainly *ready* to fight, the less chance there is that we will *have* to

fight. Being ready to fight is much more than a matter of having the best weapons and knowing how to use them. A *ready* Army is also one whose every member is determined to carry his full responsibility under all circumstances and all the time. This personal mission, this individual determination, is the big difference between an Army and a mob. A mob has no code of conduct; an Army cannot exist without one.

We have seen that for 180 years our Code of Conduct lived only in the stout hearts of American fighting men. Now we have put their Code into exact words and every fighting man is taught what the words mean. But the words will mean less than nothing unless they are *believed* and *lived* by each American fighting man.

CODE OF CONDUCT

"By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I hereby prescribe the Code of Conduct for members of the Armed Forces of the United States which is attached to this order and hereby made a part thereof . . ."

I

I AM AN AMERICAN FIGHTING MAN. I SERVE IN THE FORCES WHICH GUARD MY COUNTRY AND OUR WAY OF LIFE. I AM PREPARED TO GIVE MY LIFE IN THEIR DEFENSE.

A member of the Armed Forces is always a fighting man. As such, it is his duty to oppose the enemies of the United States regardless of the circumstances in which he may find himself, whether in active participation in combat, or as a prisoner of war.

II

I WILL NEVER SURRENDER OF MY OWN FREE WILL. IF IN COMMAND I WILL NEVER SURRENDER MY MEN WHILE THEY STILL HAVE THE MEANS TO RESIST.

As an individual, a member of the Armed Forces may never voluntarily surrender himself. When isolated and he can no longer inflict casualties on the enemy, it is his duty to evade capture and rejoin the nearest friendly forces.

The responsibility and authority of a commander never extends to the surrender of his command to the enemy while it has power to resist or evade. When isolated, or cut off, or surrounded, a unit must continue to fight until relieved, or able to rejoin friendly forces, by breaking out or by evading enemy.

III

IF I AM CAPTURED I WILL CONTINUE TO RESIST BY ALL MEANS AVAILABLE. I WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ESCAPE AND AID OTHERS TO ESCAPE. I WILL ACCEPT NEITHER PAROLE NOR SPECIAL FAVORS FROM THE ENEMY.

The duty of a member of the Armed Forces to continue resistance by all means at his disposal is not lessened by the misfortune of capture. Article 82 of the Geneva Convention pertains and must be explained. He will escape if able to do so, and will assist others to escape. Parole agreements are promises given the captor by a prisoner of war upon his faith and honor, to fulfill stated conditions, such as not to bear arms or not to escape, in consideration of special privileges, usually release from captivity or lessened restraint. He will never sign or enter into a parole agreement.

IV

IF I BECOME A PRISONER OF WAR, I WILL KEEP FAITH WITH MY FELLOW PRISONERS. I WILL GIVE NO INFORMATION OR TAKE PART IN ANY ACTION WHICH MIGHT BE HARMFUL TO MY COMRADES. IF I AM SENIOR I WILL TAKE COMMAND. IF NOT I WILL OBEY THE LAWFUL ORDERS OF THOSE APPOINTED OVER ME AND WILL BACK THEM UP IN EVERY WAY.

Informing or any other action to the detriment of a fellow prisoner is despicable and is expressly forbidden. Prisoners of war must avoid helping the enemy identify fellow prisoners who may have knowledge of particular value to the enemy, and may therefore be made to suffer coercive interrogation.

Strong leadership is essential to discipline. Without discipline, camp organization, resistance and even survival may be impossible. Personal hygiene, camp sanitation, and care of sick and wounded are imperative. Officers and non-commissioned officers of the United States will continue to carry out their responsibilities and exercise their authority subsequent to capture. The senior line officer or noncommissioned officer within the prisoner of war camp or group of prisoners will assume command according to rank (or precedence) without regard to Service. This responsibility and accountability may not be evaded. If the senior officer or noncommissioned officer is incapacitated or unable to act for any reason, command will be assumed by the next senior. If the foregoing organization cannot be effected, an organization of elected representatives, as provided for in Articles 79-81 Geneva Convention Relative to Treatment of Prisoners of War, or a covert organization, or both, will be formed.

V

WHEN QUESTIONED, SHOULD I BECOME A PRISONER OF WAR, I AM BOUND TO GIVE ONLY NAME, RANK, SERVICE NUMBER, AND DATE OF BIRTH. I WILL EVADE ANSWERING FURTHER QUESTIONS TO THE UTMOST OF MY ABILITY. I WILL MAKE NO ORAL OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS DISLOYAL TO MY COUNTRY AND ITS ALLIES OR HARMFUL TO THEIR CAUSE.

When questioned, a prisoner of war is required by the Geneva Convention and permitted by this Code to disclose his name, rank, service number and date of birth. A prisoner of war may also communicate with the enemy regarding his individual health or welfare as a prisoner of war and, when appropriate, on routine matters of camp administration. Oral or written confessions true or false, questionnaires, personal history statements, propaganda recordings and broadcasts, appeals to other prisoners of war, signatures to peace or surrender appeals, self criticisms or any other oral or written communications on behalf of the enemy or critical or harmful to the United States, its allies, the Armed Forces or other prisoners are forbidden.

It is a violation of the Geneva Convention to place a prisoner of war under physical or mental torture or any other form of coercion to secure from him information of any kind. If, however, a prisoner is subjected to such treatment, he will endeavor to avoid by every means the disclosure of any information, or the making of any statement or the performance of any action harmful to the interests of the United States or its allies or which will provide aid or comfort to the enemy.

Under Communist Bloc reservations to the Geneva Convention, the signing of a confession or the making of a statement by a prisoner is likely to be used to convict him as a war criminal under the laws of his captors. This conviction has the effect of removing him from prisoner of war status and according to this Communist Bloc device denying him any protection under terms of the Geneva Convention and repatriation until a prison sentence is served.

VI

I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT I AM AN AMERICAN FIGHTING MAN, RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTIONS, AND DEDICATED TO THE PRINCIPLES WHICH MADE MY COUNTRY FREE. I WILL TRUST IN MY GOD AND IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The provisions of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, whenever appropriate, continue to apply to members of the Armed Forces while prisoners of war. Upon repatriation, the conduct of prisoners will be examined as to the circumstances of capture and through the period of detention with due regard for the rights of the individual and consideration for the conditions of captivity.

A member of the Armed Forces who becomes a prisoner of war has a continuing obligation to remain loyal to his country, his Service and his unit.

The life of a prisoner of war is hard. He must never give up hope. He must resist enemy indoctrination. Prisoners of war who stand firm and united against the enemy will aid one another in surviving this ordeal.

[AG 461 (2 May 57)]



Declaration Of An American Citizen

I am an American Citizen -- a member of the greatest fraternity on earth -- the Brotherhood of Freemen. The initiation rolls of this worldwide Brotherhood are wide open to any man, anywhere on earth, who is deeply determined to be Free and willing to pay the personal price. Because our forefathers pioneered the continental vastness that is America and won; because the men of industry teamed up in research and development to produce the necessities and luxuries of life in a superior way; and, because a million Americans have died and millions have suffered in the wars of this Republic, I have greater Freedom than any other citizen of any other nation in any other period in the history of mankind. I have greater Freedom to Work, to Worship, to Love, to Learn, and to Play; mine is the Freedom to Compete, to Invent, to Save, to Invest, to Create, to Promote, and Own; I have Freedom to Choose, to Join, to Vote, to Speak, and to Walk erect with head high; I am free to be my own self, as an individual human soul; I am free to glorify Almighty God. And so, I jealously cherish each one of these Freedoms. Life would be as dust in a windy street if through indifference on my part I were to lose them. I know what my father and his father before him have done that I might inherit these priceless blessings. Hence, I am ready willing and eager to make my own contribution towards their Preservation. I will do everything within my power each day to Strengthen and Defend these Freedoms, wherever I am, whatever I do -- that I may pass them on to my sons and daughters undiminished. If I do not, there will be darkness at noon in America, and all over the world.

-- I -- Am Responsible



By Order of *Wilber M. Brucker*, Secretary of the Army;

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR,
General, United States Army,
Chief of Staff.

Official:

HERBERT M. JONES
Major General, United States Army,
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For explanation of abbreviations used, see SR 320-50-1.