



# Army

## Junior Command Handbook



*Serving our Nation*



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# Introduction

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As noted in doctrine, almost three million Australian men and women have served proudly in the Army's ranks, and we continue to produce soldiers and units recognised for their adaptability, courage, initiative, teamwork and professionalism. While all of these principles are important to the culture and conduct of the Australian Army, professionalism, teamwork and innovation have been selected as the themes for this edition of the Junior Commander's Handbook. To assist our junior commanders, we have asked other soldiers in Army to provide feedback and guidance on what these principles mean to them. Junior commanders from 12 units responded, and our thanks go to: 1 AVN REGT, 1 RTB, 12/40 RTR, 173 AVN SQN, Army School of Ordnance, SOI, WAUR, 2 CER, 9 FSB, 4 Regt, 1 INT BN and 8/9 RAR.

The following terms have been used in this publication and to provide context their definitions - taken from LWD 1, The Fundamentals of Land Warfare, 2008 - have been detailed.

**Professionalism.** Professionalism is the ability of soldiers to execute their duties, perform these duties in a range of circumstances, have the self-confidence to act autonomously despite risk and ambiguity, and their understanding of the purpose and consequences of their actions. It consists of more than technical proficiency in military art and science. Professionalism requires that soldiers exert themselves physically, morally and intellectually to overcome fear, confusion, tiredness and uncertainty, and allows individual soldiers and the Army as a whole to be adaptable. Soldiers should be confident that they have been well-prepared for operations. They must be given tasks that are meaningful and provide scope for professional development.

**Teamwork.** Teamwork is an essential element of a modern Army. The battlespace is becoming increasingly one in which the conduct of warfighting is broken into a number of 'mini-battles' as the result of complexity. This generates a need to spread capabilities and control rapidly to individuals, smaller teams and sub-units which places more responsibility on junior commanders. Tactical actions may have considerable strategic repercussions, putting a premium on well-trained, educated and conditioned small team leaders. More than ever, the actions of soldiers and junior leaders will be subjected to scrutiny, and their performance will become an increasingly dominant factor in land operations.

**Innovation.** Innovation is the ability of individuals to be creative and generate new ideas and novel solutions to problems, and implement them. Creativity and innovation are crucial to finding and exploiting asymmetric advantages over a thinking, adaptive enemy. Both support mission command and are, in turn, supported by non-prescriptive and agile

doctrine, and flexible standard operating procedures. Creativity and innovation are products of an organisational climate that encourages inquiry, debate, experimentation, testing and informed change.

This publication is presented in three parts. The first part provides examples from current serving JNCOs. The second part sets out to encourage critical thinking through the use of real-life vignettes or stories and thinking activities. The final part of the book provides an overview of the more recent and general junior leadership lessons held in the Centre for Army Lessons database.

It is important that JNCOs read and understand the guidance provided in this publication. You are encouraged to discuss your perceptions of professionalism, teamwork and innovation with your peers and junior soldiers. Review how you are performing in these values and be honest with yourself. If you feel that you are lacking in any areas, look to find ways to improve your performance. There are many experienced personnel in your chain of command who would be capable and willing to assist your development.

*Some submissions have been edited so that the information provided is easily understood. This was done while ensuring that the intent and lesson of the submission was not changed or lost.*

# Part One

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## *Professionalism*

JNCO examples:

### **Leadership**

A JNCO must maintain a high standard of professionalism. As a leader the buck stops with you. At times it may be necessary for a JNCO to step back and allow their soldiers to assume command without interference or micro-management. By allowing soldiers to voice and apply their ideas or methods, it encourages growth, initiative and innovation. Identify the strengths and weaknesses in your soldiers. Focus on their strengths and ensure they are given the opportunity to shine amongst their peer group. Offer constructive, not destructive, criticism to their weakness. A commander's ability to display empathy to a soldier's personal situation is directly proportional to how well they know their soldiers personally outside of work. Above all, you have a responsibility to protect the wellbeing and best interest of your soldiers. Don't ever lose sight that the rank that you are bestowed is a privilege, not a right. Take a long hard look at yourself and remember respect is earned, not demanded.

*CPL, 4 Regt*

Within the Australian Army the term 'professionalism' goes hand-in-hand with 'leadership'. In recent times, there have been widely reported articles on leadership; however, very few touch on professionalism. All personnel in the Australian Defence Force are employed to be professional, follow orders and lead by example. Professionalism is the term given to a person who is paid to undertake a specialised set of tasks and to complete these tasks. As there is a strict command structure within the Army, professionalism is commonly carried out by following orders.

For example, the key concepts that incorporate professionalism can be seen when honours and awards are presented. Words are

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*'Every person in Defence needs to model and actively espouse the values of our organisation: professionalism, loyalty, integrity, courage, innovation and teamwork [...] supervisors and managers need to lead by example to ensure that the fundamental expectations of our workforce are embedded in our organisational culture.'*

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*Dr Ian J. Watt AO  
Secretary of the  
Department of  
Defence, Defence  
Magazine, Issue  
3, 2011*

constantly used to describe and explain why a member deserves a particular award. Words that are commonly used include: initiative, commitment to training, beyond that expected of your rank, developing the next generation and the ability to inspire confidence. All these concepts underpin a professional soldier and should be the goal of every soldier (regardless of rank) to strive to achieve this level of professionalism.

*CPL, 1 RTB*

JNCOs are being promoted earlier than in previous decades which has contributed to an inherent change, for good or bad, to our defence force. It appears more likely that a JNCO will be addressed by their first name than their rank by soldiers. This small infraction means there is no disparity between work and social situations, and there is a chance that a young soldier may think twice about following a lawful command rather than acting on it straight away. Do we embrace a shift to this new culture and risk the professionalism of our army just so that we are known as the 'cool corporal'? Or should we correct errors because it is the right thing to do?

[If you are a junior commander who has been promoted early and you want to develop your leadership skills, then perhaps you should consider a posting to Kapooka.] A posting to Kapooka is a two-year leadership course. You can't be the 'grey man' or 'cuff it'. You need to have a good knowledge of doctrine and be able to apply it effectively. Soldiers posted to Kapooka leave as a leader.

*BDR, 1 RTB*

Maintaining motivation has and always will be a challenge. The way soldiers react to orders will always be a reflection of the way the orders are delivered. For example, let's say an order was given that you will be going field tomorrow and you just returned from the field yesterday. If the person delivering the orders reacts poorly and drops their bundle, everyone will, in turn, follow that path. Morale will drop and RAP visits will climb resulting in a poor outcome for the exercise or activity. The next time you get a given a task, remember that your attitude will shape the upcoming activity; so start with a positive attitude. You may not be happy about it but if you sell it right you will set up your section for success.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

## **Education and training**

In general, supported units have a rudimentary understanding of niche capabilities a specialist such as Intelligence JNCOs can provide but are not necessarily familiar with the multitude of instructions, directives, acts etc. that mandate and govern that specialist capability. As the specialist JNCO, your ability to educate the supported organisation about your capabilities



and limitations then becomes paramount in order to inform their planning and decisions. If asked about something you are unsure of, be upfront about it, seek the answer to the question and get back to them. The process of educating a supported organisation can commence in lead-up activities such as mission-specific training (MST) and mission rehearsal exercises (MRE). A number of key ideas or themes can be used during any interaction with the supported force to market your capability and educate them.

*CPL, 1 Int Bn*

The Army has a rich heritage steeped in tradition. JNCOs should ensure that soldiers under their command have a sound knowledge and understanding of such traditions, whether they are unit, corps or service oriented. With the current tempo of deployment within the Army, some of these essential aspects of service life are being placed at a lower priority to allow for the training and development of operational skills. Not finding time to refresh the foundation Army traditions instilled during recruit training will result in a degradation of this knowledge.

*CPL, ASO*



Professionalism is generated through education, training and experiential learning and is bound by culture, ethos and values. The pursuit of professionalism is something to which we, as JNCOs, must all aspire. It begins with discipline which is instilled in young soldiers from enlistment and throughout their career by various methods such as adhering to timings, dress and bearing, shaving, saluting officers, and conducting drill.

*CPL, ASO*

Preparation for a task, exercise, operation, etc. starts with you and your own ongoing personal preparation. You should by now be used to the rigours of military life, and have an understanding of most tasks that will arise, and how you should prepare. This knowledge should flow to the soldiers you command as they will hopefully follow suit and imitate what you are doing to prepare. Naturally, the training program will dictate what training you can achieve as a group and/or individual, but you can be proactive by extra research, PT, drills, etc. to ensure success, and, ultimately demonstrate, by example, your professionalism. Pride in your own work and that of your section is important as the outcomes will be a direct reflection of your input and leadership.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

There is an old saying 'do as I say, not as I do'. This has no place in a junior leader's vocabulary. Junior leaders need to set the example in all fields of soldiering as they will be the most influential trainer to their soldiers. Who wants to follow a leader who can't do simple things, like pass an F88 weapon test, throw a grenade or set up a trip flare? Junior leaders should strive to improve themselves, to show that just because we wear the rank doesn't mean we stop knowing or doing it to a very high standard. If we don't know something, don't be afraid to say so and spend time finding the answer for it.

*CPL, WAUR*

To be professional, each JNCO should take a 'battlefield pause' and re-evaluate their knowledge and skills so as to improve the success of their team. JNCOs should not only use knowledge, but ensure it is developed and shared, and maintain a record of how they sourced information they require to turn into knowledge. JNCOs should build relationships with superiors and peers from their own corps and from other corps to keep up-to-date as a quality assurance of their knowledge which, in turn, is implemented into correct training techniques and procedures for their soldiers.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

Some JNCO training conducted within units consists of a couple of lessons thrown together at a moment's notice. However, when you are posted to Kapooka as a recruit instructor

(RI) there is a different form of JNCO training every day. As an instructor at Kapooka, you instil the Army's values, ethos and doctrine. Whilst posted there you are the recruit's first impression of the Defence Force and as a RI you are what recruits should strive to emulate. If a recruit leaves Kapooka at a basic level then this is a direct reflection of your ability as a JNCO and will have an impact on the wider army throughout that soldier's service.

*BDR, 1 RTB*

Complacency should never be part of a junior leader's toolkit. There will be times where the 'she'll be right mate' attitude appears during training and this needs to be identified and stopped immediately. Conducting a drill or action well one day doesn't mean that it will be the same or better next week. Continual skills challenges and quick-decision exercises are a simple way to see what areas the section or team need to work on. This type of training tends to be overlooked within the Army Reserve, in order to conduct training that has perceived 'fun' and is 'enjoyable' in the hope of promoting member retention. All training should be built upon a foundation of improving individual skills or 'being brilliant at the basics' so that the collective or 'fun' training will have greater appeal, and lead to sustained member retention.

*CPL, WAUR*

## Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills are a key component of professionalism. It is a broad term and can encompass many personal attributes. Firstly, a key attribute is your maturity as an individual, and as a team, section or detachment. Additionally, your ability to remain emotionally detached from an issue or problem will allow you to think more objectively and clearly in order to reach a solution.

*CPL, 1 Int Bn*

Your communication skills in all formats (verbal, written etc.) are often how you will be judged. It is how you convey your ideas to the supported force, your subordinates etc. It matters little if you have the subject matter expertise, if you cannot effectively communicate your ideas or intent. These skills need to be of the highest possible standard in order to reflect the professionalism of the individual or team, and add to your overall credibility.

*CPL, 1 Int Bn*

Junior Leaders have to lead, not be mates with their soldiers. The saying 'be firm, friendly but not familiar' is an occupational requirement of being a junior leader and it needs to be developed, enhanced and maintained. Your soldiers should have open communication and be able to come to you with any problem, but you don't want this to lead to over-familiarity so that they think they can get away with not doing basic soldierly tasks.

*CPL, WAUR*



Are you a yeller? We all have our own styles that work for us; however, I pose this question; have you noticed how some people do not bother with the bloke who carries on like a 'two bob watch'? When I was a section 2IC I got in some very hot water. A new CSM had marched in and I did not know much about him, but I had experienced a few CSMs before so I thought to myself, 'get ready for a blast'. In this case I was caught off guard. My CSM sat me down and spoke to me very quietly, so that I had to strain to hear him. Out of his mouth came five words which will make any self-respecting soldier swallow hard 'I'm very disappointed in you'. This was a lesson that I will always remember as it taught me that you don't need to yell to get a response. Next time one of your soldiers stuffs up, hold back the 'carry on' and speak quietly. That way when you do have to use your voice everyone will know that you are serious and react appropriately.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

Junior leaders need a level of maturity and self-discipline to acknowledge the separation between them and their subordinates while still being compassionate to their needs as soldiers. Respect for one-another and the hierarchy of the Army has bred significant bonds in time of war and peace, and is the cornerstone of the Australian Army mateship legend.

*SGT, WAUR*

Outside of formal lessons you will be required to give guidance of a non-military nature. During my time in platoons as an instructor I have worn many different hats. I have been the parent, counsellor and mentor, and have given advice on money management and

relationship issues to name but a few. On one occasion a recruit informed me that her mother had taken money from her account without her permission and on the same day I had a 29-year-old man cry in front of me. Issues ranging from 'my dog has died' to 'my girlfriend has left me' are hurdles you will face in every platoon.

*BDR, 1 RTB*

## **Subject matter expertise**

A fundamental aspect to being professional is being a subject matter expert in your trade. Your ability to provide relevant, timely and sound advice and guidance to the organisation you support is vital and goes hand-in-hand with how you as an individual and your capability will be received. Not only do you need to intimately understand your own capability (both deliverables and limitations), you also need to understand the supported organisation and how you can contribute to their planning and operations. In this regard, your expertise cannot be limited to your own trade; it must encompass a comprehensive understanding of the supported organisation.

*CPL, 1 Int Bn*

Subject matter expertise can be achieved by striving for excellence in your trade courses. It is attained in the individual and collective training space in parent units prior to deployment or integration activity. It is an individual's responsibility to be proactive in seeking opportunities for professional development to enhance knowledge and skills.

*CPL, 1 Int Bn*

Improving your own abilities will not only increase your comprehension of the tasks required of you and your soldiers, but it will also set a positive example for your subordinates by showing your willingness to conduct self-improvement. Soldiers conducting self-improvement will alleviate some of the training you need to organise as they would have started developing themselves into a future JNCO. This behaviour should be encouraged. Cultivate these skills by conducting regular training in skills which they are lacking or by encouraging these members to improve these skills themselves.

*CPL, ASO*

As a JNCO holds a position of authority, we must be disciplined in all that we do; ethically, morally and in our soldierly standards and skills. As JNCOs we are entrusted as subject matter experts to instill in our young soldiers the appropriate skills, knowledge, insights and values to the best of our ability.

*CPL, ASO*

The soldiers under your command should be able to look to you and see a high level of professionalism that they will want emulate. Dress, bearing and general attitude are all signs of that level of professionalism. If you present yourself at work in a neat and tidy uniform, your soldiers will follow suit. If you perform all tasks professionally then your soldiers will see this as the required standard. A positive and professional attitude to your work is also necessary if you want the same from the soldiers under your command.

*CPL, 1 Avn Regt*

After a year at Kapooka you become a senior RI and, due to your experience level, you become a mentor to those newly posted RIs in addition to continuing with your instructional duties. During my first year instructing at Kapooka my senior RI had only completed five years in the Army, whereas I had completed nine. His extra year as an instructor far outweighed my extra four years' experience in the Army regarding his professionalism and instructional ability.

*BDR, 1 RTB*

## **Maintain a high personal standard**

Everybody is a role model. The question is, are you a good or bad one? Lead by example; don't expect your soldiers to do anything that you are not prepared to do yourself. Soldiers under your command will learn and acquire their knowledge and skill sets through observing your actions and behaviour. By providing good leadership and going about it professionally, the chance of bad habits and poor discipline is minimised. 'Selective compliance' is a wonderful phrase describing the commander that will in one breath enforce policy at a soldier's expense and in the same breath see himself above the rule to do the same in kind.

*CPL, 4 Regt*

The standard of an individual's dress, appearance and general demeanour reflects on the Australian Defence Force. Dress and bearing is the cornerstone of a successful soldier and contributes towards being able to positively influence those around you as a JNCO. They should be maintained at the highest possible standard, otherwise there will be tendencies to allow double standards, which will have your subordinates lose faith in your command and leadership abilities. Service skills such as dress and bearing, AIRN compliance, weapon proficiency, personal fitness and ongoing personal trade knowledge development must be maintained at a high level with a requirement for your subordinates do the same. If a JNCO was to avoid PT, was unable to pass the basic fitness assessment or was unable to correctly handle a weapon, then how can they expect their soldiers to maintain the required standards?

*CPL, ASO*



I feel the making of a professional JNCO begins early in a soldier's career, being mentored in not only the core trade but also in general military skills by professional and experienced JNCOs. Professional and experienced JNCOs not only lead by example as role models, but also pass on the need to embrace the military culture, ethos and values. JNCOs must continually develop their own skills, knowledge, insights and values in order to instill these in their young soldiers.

*CPL, ASO*

Professionalism is leading by example and setting the standard for the soldiers under your command. Your soldiers look to you to show them how they should act and behave. If they see their JNCO performing tasks to a high standard then they will be more inclined to perform their own tasks to that same high standard. This can also work the other way, in that if they see their leaders performing tasks to the minimum standard then you have no right to ask better of them and can expect poor performance as a result. You as the JNCO need to lead by example and through your own actions, demonstrate the level of professionalism you expect of them.

*CPL, 1 Avn Regt*

Junior leaders are at the forefront of soldier development and training. Effective leadership comes from the capable and competent day-to-day conduct of a junior leader who is competent in all doctrinal, administrative and welfare management areas of their soldiers on an ongoing basis. An effective junior leader should have a good foundation level of knowledge and then have the skills to address and correct any knowledge gaps.

*SGT, WAUR*

## **Professional development**

Why are some soldiers really good and others slow off the mark? I asked a friend who is in the SAS Regt this same question. He responded that they are not always the best at everything; they don't get everything right all of the time. It's simply that they do get all of the 'one percenters' right. If they don't know something then they actively look for the answers mostly IN THEIR OWN TIME; they don't make excuses. They see the value in rehearsals and conduct them constantly even if it is just a talk through; every person knows what they are doing as well as what everybody else is doing. It all adds up to a 100% effort. Now, not everyone can be a Trooper in the SASR; however, you can take that mentality and use it to better yourself. Just get the one percenters right.

*CPL 12/40 RTR*

A professional JNCO should always be prepared. This can be achieved by having a complete understanding of the superior commander's intent, then using your training to develop an appropriate course of action to ensure that the task is completed within the time and resources allocated. A JNCO should use the military appreciation process to plan all tasks to help with quality assurance, positive development and assessment of training outcomes. When planning, a good JNCO always looks at the primary, secondary and tertiary effects of their decisions when tasked. A successful JNCO uses their knowledge to enhance forward thinking, planning and innovation to have positive outcomes for individuals, teams and organisations. Good planning and innovation doesn't just come from individuals, but also from sound knowledge and teamwork.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*



## Teamwork

JNCO examples:

### Leadership

Leaders should lead by example; work with soldiers doing whatever tasks they are doing even if it is only for a short period of time. Do not adopt the attitude of 'I have done my time' because soldiers may not appreciate that concept. Contributing with the soldiers will promote trust in leadership and set the standard that you expect from your soldiers. Treat all soldiers equally regardless of their attitude, fitness, injury or mental capacity. If an atmosphere of favouritism is created, jealousy and mistrust will follow. By being fair and firm, soldiers will feel like they belong, thus promoting teamwork and morale.

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*'In terms of leadership by example, teamwork is one of our values and I think we've seen a very high level of teamwork right from the top.'*

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*Air Chief Marshal  
Angus Houston  
CDE, Defence  
Magazine, Issue  
3, 2011*

*CPL, ASO*

Work smart, not hard. This can be achieved through the effective use of equipment, stores and man power. Know the capacity of your soldiers and have confidence in their abilities. Know how and where they can be deployed for maximum effectiveness. As a leader, use your soldiers' collective knowledge when determining how to resolve a task and which stores are required to carry out the task.

*CPL, 1 Avn Regt*

Know each soldier's strengths and weaknesses to ascertain which role they can undertake for the best contribution to the team. You, as the junior leader, need to be personable, confident and direct when talking to soldiers because you can't rehearse motivation speeches and the like, as they sound fake. You have to look them in the eye so they know you are serious.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

A lot of senior commanders do not like it these days when you yell and scream at soldiers but it still has its place. You obviously can't do it all the time as they will get used to it and switch off; however, an occasional 'roast' will get their attention. What does not work is being the soldier's mate and their junior commander because they'll walk all over you. Often when a soldier is first promoted, they will stay close friends with the privates and a lot of problems can arise from being afraid to order their mates around. This can be overcome by being internally posted on promotion to a different company where you don't know anyone as well and can start on the 'front foot'.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

When drafting or refining SOPs I have found one of the best places to look is your section or team. This is mostly due to the nature of our business and the fact that we have such a diverse culture and extremely varied work experience, though we are generally working to the same goals. Using the skills and knowledge from my peers and team members has allowed me to try out and develop new ideas which has allowed me to become more effective in my job. This has had a twofold effect: it gets team members to be creative and it bounces ideas around which has created a stronger team bond. I strongly believe that it has been a great tool for developing not only my understanding but it has also shaped and developed leadership within the team. This process has also created a very strong work ethic where the team is striving to be better and work together to improve each individual's skills.

*CPL, 12/40 RTR*

Junior leaders could enable significant development in their subordinates if they were to encourage them to observe and reflect upon their immediate superior's job role and leadership style. Junior commanders should be looking to create opportunities to hold open forums to allow reflection on leadership styles and team cohesion. Having subordinates participate in discussions on leadership

style considerations will increase their understanding of the decisions and situations that junior commanders must consider in order to maintain a balance between the desires of higher command (which must always be met), and the morale and effectiveness of their team. This will also increase mutual trust and respect between junior commanders and their troops, which are both vital elements within a successful team.

*CPL 9 FSB*

Give soldiers achievable goals and reward them for achieving them with positive reinforcement. Any tangible rewards can create a precedence that gives your soldiers the impression that they will get rewarded for simply doing what they are being paid for. Rewarding them with positive reinforcement when they do a good job is far more subtle and, in the long run, worth more.

*‘Man is a goal-seeking animal. His life only has meaning if he is reaching out and striving for his goals.’*

*CPL, ASO*

*Aristotle*

In the field, or in arduous conditions in general, where tasks may take longer to achieve, you and your team will need to consider a work–rest roster. This will ensure that the required effort is sustained for the duration of the task and will help to maintain morale. A JNCO needs to know when to lead by example and physically be involved and when to step back, assess, delegate and continue to monitor the progress of the task and their team.

*CPL, 1 Avn Regt*

## Share knowledge

As the tempo of operations has increased, so has our individual responsibility and accountability. It seems that the focus has moved from the ‘strategic corporal’ to include the ‘strategic soldier’. More emphasis has been placed on the soldier being not only proficient at their job but looking ‘two up’. My point is that all small teams need to have a team-oriented environment. This can be built using many methods such as team PT, social functions etc. They are even more effective when used in combinations of team-related activities. In addition to clear expectations and trust



from all levels of command, I have found that the team is then more productive and much more willing to strive for the end result no matter what the task.

*CPL 12/40 RTR*

Junior commanders have an opportunity to improve their leadership skills through mentoring. Training and development can be provided to the junior commander from those above and the junior commander should provide it for their soldiers. Mentoring provides soldiers with a unique and advantageous learning opportunity and access to knowledge that has been acquired from real-life experiences. The mentoring process enables those involved to apply reflections upon their own past experiences as leaders. The Army needs to encourage and develop both informal and formal mentoring opportunities to use the knowledge and experience base of its more seasoned soldiers. The premise of learning the job off the soldier above you has become neglected and too much reliance is being placed on structured career courses to prepare soldiers for leadership roles, trade-specific skills as well as all corps soldiering skills.

*CPL, 9 FSB*



## Morale

Over the years I have developed my own understanding on what morale is and how to develop it. I believe that morale has little to do with making a soldier happy; in fact happiness does not often go hand-in-hand with good morale. Morale is more closely aligned to attitude and attitude is aligned to choice. Sometimes it is a very difficult choice, but a choice nonetheless. If a JNCO's personal discipline is good and they make good choices then their attitude is good, which directly affects morale.

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*'Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.'*

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*Winston Churchill*

*CPL, ASO*

With good morale comes good motivation and with good motivation comes team involvement. From my time in the military I have learnt that morale and communication are the most important tools a JNCO has at their disposal. I have been part of a section that had great morale and no matter what was thrown our way we smiled through it, pulled together and achieved more than we thought we could. Even when we were hurting, I felt a sense of belonging, achievement and happiness that I have yet to exceed. By developing a section with great morale you will not only create an asset for your commander but also learn what a group of people with the same goals can achieve. Training as part of a team improves morale as soldiers know they are not alone and often form close bonds. Using group activities to complete work or training can motivate the whole group. It also helps those members of the team who are not as confident to 'come out of their shell' within the group to get more involved with their peers and build their self-confidence.

*CPL, ASO*

## Communication

A leader must provide clear communication on upcoming tasks, events, courses and any information that may affect their soldiers. This will help soldiers to understand what is going on and to plan ahead. Additionally, leaders need to back up their boss 100 per cent or it will create mistrust in all decisions made. Unity will promote loyalty.

*CPL, ASO*

Be quick and accurate with soldier's administration. Being tardy with personal administration creates stress and a stressed soldier is a distracted soldier. A distracted soldier is a burden to the leader and the team. Make soldiers aware that not maintaining a positive outlook and complaining about trivial matters is selfish as all they are doing is making someone else feel bothered in order to make themselves feel better. Inform them that biting back at a tired or disgruntle soldier's comments only feeds aggression and alienates the other.

*CPL, ASO*

Assess your personnel. Make sure you have enough personnel in the team with the correct skills and qualifications for each particular task. Know if any members of your team have welfare problems which will have an impact on their performance to carry out their tasks. Every member of the team will need to know their role and responsibilities. A good passage of information will enable junior commanders to be across all of this.

*CPL, 1 Avn Regt*

## Development of the team

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*'Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.'*

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*Dwight D. Eisenhower*

Teamwork is achieved by providing soldiers with perspective by involving them in the planning stages of tasks. This can also provide valuable insight into the soldier's level of knowledge, to train or enhance a soldier's skill set and gives you an alternative way to complete a task. If soldiers come up with a way of completing a task that will achieve all necessary outcomes within the allotted time frame, give them the go ahead, even if it is not the most efficient plan. This will promote ownership to the idea which will build morale in itself and outside-the-box thinking.

*CPL, ASO*

Respect for individual soldiers and leadership is the foundation for getting the best out of a team. A JNCO should have a good understanding of their subordinate's professional and personal experiences to enhance the team's capability. The Army of today

has well-educated soldiers. Most soldiers have completed secondary education and a number of soldiers have also completed or are completing tertiary education. This knowledge can be used by the JNCO to shape their organisation and mould and develop a soldier's career. To get the best out of your team don't just use your team's Army skills, use their personal skills and education as this will benefit morale and the quality of work.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

## Building trust

Teamwork relies upon individuals working together in a cooperative environment to achieve common goals through sharing knowledge and skills. To build this teamwork, JNCOs must be able to share knowledge and skills and build trust with all members in the section. Having trust within the team and sharing their knowledge and skills will enable the team to work effectively together and cause a positive attitude to reach a common goal or mission.



Young soldiers look up to their JNCO as an educator; a source to gain skills and knowledge that the JNCOs have learnt through life experiences. If a JNCO doesn't have the qualities expected of junior leaders then the younger soldiers will be less inclined to work effectively within the section to get the task done.

*CPL, ASO*

Soldiers, especially new soldiers, can find it challenging to maintain personal discipline which can result in disciplinary action. However, a junior commander can help avoid this by providing good foundations. A commander can help a soldier maintain their personal discipline through respect rather than fear of punishment. It is my opinion that this is a sign of a true leader.

*CPL, ASO*

To gain a higher output of work from your team, you should involve them in the task from the planning stage to the end state and make sure an after action review is completed so that you can give and receive feedback. This will allow for growth in your organisation, higher morale within your team and allows you to see growth in the performance of your team.

A team's capacity for work is the direct result of a JNCO's ability to lead, command and maintain quality while enhancing knowledge. Faith and trust in your organisation's mission, training and leadership will enhance how effective your team will react and work while on a task. Proper training and instruction develops professional awareness and trust from subordinates.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

## **Relying on your mates**

A good example of teaching teamwork to soldiers is the conduct of adventure training; soldiers are taken out of their comfort zones and therefore have to rely on other members of the team to help them complete an activity. This helps build a soldier's self-esteem and helps

them to feel confident to participate in a team environment. An individual cannot succeed unless the other members of the group succeed.

*CPL, ASO*

When a new soldier enters the Army they are immediately taken away from their friends and family, and out of their comfort zone. They are thrust into a new environment of rules and training. However, we all know that the soldier is not alone. They go through this experience with a platoon of people facing the same challenges and forging a close bond. They are taught

that if they work together then they will get through anything. JNCOs could recall these experiences when looking to develop teamwork in their section, seeking to develop mateship, as well as loyalty and friendship.

*CPL, ASO*

As a Ground Crewman Mission Support CP Operator and Supervisor for Air Medical Evacuations (AMEs), it is important that everyone involved knows and understands their role in order to ensure the helicopter is launched successfully. Occasionally we will get a call in the middle of the night and have to respond immediately. As a JNCO, it is one of my responsibilities to ensure that my subordinates are fully aware of their duties and are able to carry them out confidently at a moment's notice. When we get a call, many different elements need to be coordinated to provide a rapid response. Operations will 'sound the alarm' and monitor communications from the ground. Emergency response and medical personnel will jump on and deploy with the aircraft. Q Store personnel will issue equipment, the Ground Crewman Aircraft Support refuellers will be on standby ready to refuel, and the aircrew will fly the aircraft to its destination. Teamwork is the key; if one section is unable to employ their skills adequately it may be detrimental to the entire launch process and a successful and safe completion to the mission. Although we have 30 minutes to launch the aircraft, we are constantly striving to better ourselves and achieve faster results. When everyone in the team works together well, getting a helicopter in the air within 15 minutes of being woken up is a reality.

*LCPL, 173 Avn Sqn TLAG 18*

## Environment

It is imperative to create an environment that promotes teamwork for the very basic purpose of survival. Every action we take has consequences, just like a car braking and causing a traffic jam. The driver of that vehicle may not see the results until they turn on the six o'clock news and see the congestion nor understand their role in it. Being a part of the Australian Defence Force, our actions can have grave consequences and, just like the driver of the car, we

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*'If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.'*

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*Henry Ford*

may be oblivious to them. Having an effective team can help avoid situations like this. Basic teamwork can be achieved by having a clearly defined goal and a common understanding of the task's importance by all parties involved. To create an environment that promotes teamwork we must have high morale, motivation, effective communication, and a strong and dependable leadership.

*CPL, ASO*





## ***Innovation***

JNCO examples:

### **Leadership**

With leadership comes responsibility. We need to maintain a connection with all ranks above and below us and be able to relate to our diggers – instructing, leading and guiding them as necessary. However, it is also important to maintain some disconnection from the soldiers under your command as there are important decisions that need to be made and they have to be made for the right reasons – to bring them all home or prepare them for anything that may arise. It is important to know soldiers' strengths and to work on their weaknesses through constructive and innovative training to keep them motivated to achieve good results.

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*Innovation  
distinguishes  
between a leader  
and a follower.'*

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*Steve Jobs*

*CPL, WAUR*

Innovation is a critical component that an Australian soldier must have. Throughout history, 'diggers' have been renowned for this

quality in the face of adversity. An example of this comes from the withdrawal from Gallipoli where soldiers developed the 'trench rifle' to allow water-timed rifles to fire thereby giving the illusion that the heavily fortified trenches were still manned.

*CPL, 1 RTB*

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*'You do not lead by hitting people over the head - that's assault, not leadership.'*

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*Dwight Eisenhower*

Keep the training relevant and have variety so that soldiers don't get bored with doing the same thing over and over. For example, start small and then build up to something significant like scenario-based training. Doctrine must be used in 'black and white' terms, though there is scope to use more efficient drills at the TTP level, within the safety regulations. Conventional tactics have stood the test of time; however, urban-type drills are continuing to evolve and the JNCO needs to 'stay in front of the pack' when it comes to new TTP that have been developed from either our own or other force's experiences.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

A junior leader's critical vulnerability is complacency; the view of 'it'll be right mate' which comes from a lack of discipline and a misunderstanding of the 'I am soldier' principle. Effective warfighting comes from a continuation of mastering the basic soldier skills required to effectively use the infantry doctrine in the current complex battlespace. Junior leaders need to be able to critically assess on an individual basis, determine knowledge gaps, and then address these via effective instruction and 'test and adjust' mechanisms on an ongoing basis.

*SGT WAUR*

## **Initiative**

A key component of professionalism is initiative. Your motivation and ability to self-start are critical to your credibility as a professional. This is not just in response to tasks, but also in your ability to anticipate the requirements of supported elements and to make a start on them. This obviously needs to be done tactfully and in consultation with the supported element to avoid duplication of effort. Hand-in-hand with this is your ability to not only identify problems, or obstacles, but to provide innovative

and workable solutions. You must value add during planning activities and operations to be considered an asset.

*CPL, 1 Int Bn*

I believe that the best way to fix shortfalls is to encourage subordinates to not only identify the issues that need to be addressed but to also have them come up with solutions. In order to promote innovation and teamwork, a good JNCO needs to support their soldiers by involving them in the problem-solving process; making them aware of what avenues and support is available; and, most importantly, bestowing ownership of the solution to the soldier. This will provide the soldier with pride in their work and prevent unnecessary complaining about problems that never get fixed.

*‘Ten soldiers wisely led  
will beat a hundred  
without a head.’*

*Quote from  
an unknown  
military source.*

*CPL, 173 Avn Sqn*

## **Interpersonal Skills**

Complacency is an issue that junior leaders need to be aware of. They should always remember what it was like being a soldier. If the soldiers are bored, it is the junior leaders that need to start working to keep the training interesting and innovative by having competitions and setting goals for the section to try and achieve. Exposing the section to innovative and challenging training will build confidence and make them more capable soldiers.

*CPL, WAUR*

Junior leaders need to show professionalism at all times and be able to do what is right. If they continue to make the right and, sometimes harder decision, the result will be highly skilled soldiers ready and able for any task they are given.

*CPL, WAUR*

Innovation is using doctrine as a ‘foundation stone’ then creatively re-engineering training techniques and procedures to enhance the training and achieve the desired endstate. Knowing the capability of your soldiers and equipment will help with the development of innovative outcomes. This will lead to getting the best out of your team by eliminating their weaknesses while maintaining interest.

Innovation comes from involving subject matter experts and then sourcing knowledge from the correct publications.

*CPL, 8/9 RAR*

The junior leader of the Army Reserve needs to understand their soldiers' civilian career and life experiences so that they know the broad range of capabilities they have at their disposal.

*SGT, WAUR*

# Part Two

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## *Vignettes*

### **Professionalism**

#### **Vignette One**

Private Echo is an exemplary soldier who outperforms every other soldier in the platoon. Best in drill, weapon handling, always has his uniform ironed, always first picked in the sports team and liked by everyone in the platoon. However, at least two times every week he forgets to wear his rank slide. When you question him about it he says that it doesn't matter because he is only a Private so he does not have any rank.

Thinking activity

- If you were his Corporal would you charge him for being out of uniform?
- How can you go about improving his attitude so that it is more professional?
- To what level would you accept unprofessional conduct before you could not ignore it?

## Vignette Two

CPL Foxtrot is a senior member of your platoon who is very professional and a role model that everyone respects. You have some questions about the range shoot coming up next week so you look him up on Facebook. The first thing you see on his home page is a photo of him in his underwear; he appears to be unconscious with vomit down the front of him.

- Does this change your opinion of him as a professional?
- Would it make a difference that you know he usually only has one or two drinks in the club with the boys or if the caption under the photo read “The things we do on holidays!”?
- What type of information, if found on a soldier’s Facebook page, would prompt you to take action?

## **Innovation**

### **Vignette Three**

Private Golf loves trying out new ideas all the time. He is always coming up with ways to save time and make the job easier. The only problem is he does not talk to the rest of his section about the changes and does not get approval from his Corporal. Sometimes this causes more work for his section because the results are not what the others are expecting.

- Discuss the merits of this behaviour in introducing innovation. How would you do it differently?
- What processes and involvement from the team can improve this?
- What avenues are available for soldiers to showcase their innovate solutions/products?



## Teamwork

### Vignette Four

SGT Hotel is the OIC for this year's range practice and at the end there are excess rounds. There are a number of soldiers in your section that passed the practice but lack confidence in weapon handling and would benefit from some more experience. You suggest this to SGT Hotel but he answers that the coaches will be using the excess rounds because that is what we always do.

- You know the coaches have worked hard all day helping the soldiers. Is this a fair use of the resources?
- Should SGT Hotel have approached this a different way?
- How else can you improve your soldiers' skill and knowledge in weapon handling?

### **Vignette Five**

LCPL Juliet has been allocated the job of arranging the touch football team for the platoon. He knows eight members of the platoon play touch football every weekend so he chooses all eight for his team so they will be sure of winning the cup.

- Is this good teamwork?
- Is there a better way to pick the touch football team?
- What could be done to involve more members of the platoon?



# Part Three

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## *JNCO lessons 2012*

The following are a sample of observations taken from interviews with personnel recently returned from operations, Exercise HAMEL 12 and other passive collection efforts in 2012. In many cases, these observations have been fed back into Army through reports.

### **Command**

It is essential that there is consistency in the application of the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982 (DFDA). All NCO and officers receive formal training on the DFDA, but some personnel do not get to practise its application within units. It was recommended that refresher training is conducted to ensure that members are comfortable in applying the DFDA correctly.

On one deployment, there was a need for junior soldiers to have alternative activities programmed for them in order to alleviate boredom; the boredom leading, potentially, to the risk of disciplinary issues. This was evident mainly while on ships and was reduced somewhat when soldiers were on dry land. A key recommendation in fighting boredom was to have programmed activities whether they have constructive training value or are social in nature.

Be consistent in command decisions. Soldiers will see instances of 'one rule for them and another rule for us' and it will cause cynicism within the ranks. Don't be the junior leader that accepts double standards and give feedback to your peers if you see them being inconsistent.

### **Orders**

The practice of preparing written orders using the SMEAC format was used throughout pre-deployment training by the OC. This ensured that all JNCOs and above were fluent in hand-written orders in case the in-theatre command support systems were not functioning.

It was essential for commanders at all levels to keep their orders simple and quick. The reason the delivery of orders is taught this way is that soldiers and leaders are often tired and exhausted from tasks while on deployment. While this is well known, there are too many examples where complex orders are developed and poorly absorbed by tired operators. If commanders expect their soldiers and officers to effectively absorb and process their intent, it is essential orders are kept simple and brief.

## Training

Senior Officers have stated that it is evident in the conduct of our soldiers that the Australian Army training at the initial employment training (IET) and JNCO level is of a very high standard and holds up well in comparison to other armies, particularly with respect to their world view and cultural training.

There have been numerous examples of scenarios during exercises which, for the purpose of expediency, have not been followed through to their logical conclusion. Whilst this is good to keep the tempo of the exercise flowing, it does not allow the supporting elements, such as the logistics and health elements, to practise their trades. It also gives a false sense of reality to the supported elements regarding the time required for support to be provided. JNCOs should keep this factor in mind when developing their section-level training.

The training institutions give the basic knowledge for JNCOs to be leaders but it needs to be strongly emphasised that this is only the starting point for the growth of an effective leader. More emphasis needs to be placed on the mentoring of junior leaders and soldiers by our senior leaders once back in the units for them to get a broader appreciation of how best to apply the knowledge from the training institutions.

## Leadership

JNCO are no longer peers with their soldiers. They can still be their mates, but that relationship needs to change when in uniform. In the past, junior leaders were promoted into leadership positions after five years. In some recent examples this has been reduced to just two years, which could be considered an insufficient amount of time in rank. A difference between the two is that the two-year CPL section commander has great difficulty stopping being mates with soldiers in the section and acting as a leader, whereas the five-year CPL has usually already developed into a group leader.

The NCO's role in the preparation and the maintenance of individual soldier skills is the cornerstone in achieving effective battle preparation. Shaping the mind, body, skills and attitude (ie, culture and habits) of individual soldiers in the development of the section, troop/platoon, combat team and battlegroup is critical to winning the fight. Fundamental to the NCOs achieving effective battle preparation in support of the mission and the commander's end state (ie, winning the fight), is a complete understanding of the implementation, conduct, practice and rehearsal of unit SOPs, TTPs and operational procedures for combat operations. In general, the soldier's warfighting skills are good; however, there were some examples noted of poor personal discipline. An example of this was when soldiers on picket were sitting on top of the turret instead of sitting inside.

## Skills/Knowledge

Some JNCOs have not had a great deal of time to practice basic warfighting skills, resulting in a loss of skills. Soldiers need to be given the opportunity to develop their skills within units. The Junior Leadership Course gives them the core skills but units need to identify in what areas their soldiers need to develop and then allocate training time for this to be addressed. This internal training should be made a high priority. Further, as we only deploy on a major exercise once every three years due to the force generation cycle rotation of the ready brigade, these skills are not practiced in the field sufficiently. There should be brigade-level exercises conducted in each brigade every year.

SGTs and CPLs are typically very good in the areas in which they have experience but this generally only covers one small portion of a unit's mission-essential task list. Most soldiers have operated in a forward operating base environment where the basic soldier skills such as setting up a vehicle hide or living under hutchies have not been practiced. These skills have deteriorated over the years and need to be reinforced as a requirement in high-tempo operations and practiced more often. Many soldiers have operational experience and unfortunately some have developed a 'been there, done that' mentality and think they can bluff their new troop leaders. Soldiers should be mindful that they are part of a team and must apply their skills to ensure that all members are trained to the highest possible standard.



The more field experience soldiers are exposed to the better, so a long exercise like HAMEL is a terrific opportunity for soldiers to spend a reasonable period of time out bush. To maximise this training opportunity, and to prepare soldiers for a non-Afghanistan combat experience, soldiers need to be briefed and prepared for it. This includes making tough calls like taking mobile phones from them and dealing with the consequences. Troops should be air inserted into the training area so that they need to travel light, with swags and other bulky items being delivered later (if at all).

Soldiers who are provided unique specialist skills need to have opportunities to regularly practice them. If this is not provided then it is highly likely that these skills will degrade over time. Knowledge that is gained through informal experiences appears to be more perishable than core skills gained through formal training. For example, soldiers were provided language training up to seven months before a deployment. The unit did not provide opportunities to practice these skills and so soldiers were 'rusty' at the start of the deployment. That said, soldiers should also be aware that they have a responsibility to their mates and to their leadership group to maintain these skills when entrusted with that responsibility. It should be a two-way street.

There are times when specialist training may not meet the needs of the group – the practices appear illogical, the soldiers do not fully understand the TTPs or resources have not been available for training. If this should happen, then JNCOs need to demonstrate initiative in looking after their section. Discuss your concerns with the chain-of-command and develop realistic plans to overcome these problems. If you can't implement a 'gold plated' solution, come up with other workable options.

Throughout 2012, CAL collected a lot of weapon training and shooting tips from soldiers which was published in some detail in Smart Soldier 32. A summary of those tips are as follows:

- know and apply the marksmanship principles,
- apply a considered normal breathing cycle and shoot at the natural pause in breathing,
- use WTSS to correct faults in your shooting skills,
- use unit coaches to help improve your shooting skills, and
- compete against yourself and aim to get a better result each time.





## **Passage of information**

Soldiers from a unit stated that they felt unit leadership was good, and the defined tasks were clear and concise. This included the passage of information. Their main concern was that when external units were involved, the passage of information was not as reliable. More time practicing with external units prior to exercises and deployments would help this issue.

Relevant information needs to be passed onto soldiers before and during the conduct of tasks. Not doing so could cause the soldiers to be confused as to the purpose and outcomes of the task and cause them to wonder why they are doing it, and then they may not be motivated to put in a good performance (though all soldiers should have a professional outlook and conduct to ensure that this did not happen).





