



An Introduction and Mentoring Series

For

New Members and Emerging Leaders

Developed By

Al Lipphardt,

VFW All American Triple Crown Commander



A B C's

of

Membership

**The Integration of Military Values
in our VFW and Family Lives**

Chapter 1

Preface

All those who have contributed to the many hours of mentoring new members and emerging leaders in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is hereby acknowledged and appreciated. It has never been more important we do stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

The idea of mentoring can no longer be the sole responsibility of our National organization. Each of us has an individual responsibility to provide institutional knowledge of the customs and traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to our comrades.

I come from the generation of “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country”. So, this is my effort to ask not what the Veterans of Foreign Wars can do for me, Ask what can I do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. For over 50 years I have been blessed to be in positions of leadership where I was able to share my experiences and lessons learned. These experiences came from service in uniform, from combat as a soldier in Vietnam, from the perspectives as an employee to perspectives as a successful business owner, to be part of and serve as a leader in an International Service organization, to personal and professional ups and downs, to a marriage of over 54 years, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Through all these things I understood one indisputable fact. The talent I have been given is a gift from my Creator. The use of that talent is my gift in return.

And so, I offer you my perspective on what I understand as the ABC’s of Membership for new members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and emerging leaders. Make no mistake, our new members are our emerging leaders and unless we help prepare them for their responsibilities, we will not have the capacity to meet the needs of future veterans. I invite you to adopt the mantra “Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In” because “If it’s to be, it’s up to me”. Be the difference.

Table of Contents

Week 1	The Value of Loyalty
Week 2	The Value of Duty
Week 3	The Value of Respect
Week 4	The Value of Selfless Service
Week 5	The Value of Honor
Week 6	The Value of Integrity
Week 7	The Value of Personal Courage
Week 8	The Value of Commitment
Week 9	The Value of Devotion
Week 10	Summary Excellence

Daily schedule for each week

Tuesday	Live Introduction of Military Values/Subjects
Wednesday	Value Defined
Thursday	Inspirational and Motivational Quotes
Friday	Integrating the Value in our Military Service.
Saturday	Integrating the Value in our VFW Life.
Sunday	Integrating the Value in our Family Life.
Monday	Motivational Monday of the Subject Value

Week One of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Loyalty

Integration of our military values into our values as a Veteran Service Organization.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW)

.... No One Does More For Veterans

For the next 10 weeks we will look at the values common and specific to each branch of service as they relate to the purpose of our beloved VFW. Each week we will focus on a different value. These are values we learned during our basic training and applied not only in our daily lives as service members but continue with us today.

The purpose in sharing these values is to help each of us to focus on what is hoped to be an acceptance or a reaffirmation of the mantra.

"Believe In What You Do - Do what You Believe In".

Wednesday Defined

Loyalty

Loyalty, in general use, is a devotion and faithfulness to a nation, cause, philosophy, country, group, or person. Philosophers disagree on what can be an object of loyalty, as some argue that loyalty is strictly interpersonal and only another human being can be the object of loyalty. The definition of loyalty in law and political science is the fidelity of an individual to a nation, either one's nation of birth, or one's declared home nation by oath.

Core Values Specific Military Characteristics

Army's value of loyalty is to "Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other Soldiers. Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. A loyal Soldier is one who supports the leadership and stands up for fellow Soldiers. By wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army, you are expressing your loyalty. And by doing your share, you show unit loyalty.

It may serve the Veterans Of Foreign Wars if it were to adopt the value of loyalty to be "Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the VFW, and its' members". Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. A loyal VFW Member is one who supports the leadership and stands for fellow members. By wearing the "Cross of Malta" you are expressing your loyalty. And by doing your share you show loyalty to your post, district, department, and national organization.

Thursday Inspirational "Believe In What You Do - Do what You Believe In."

Friday in Military Life

Loyalty is common to all members of the military services and to veterans, particularly those who deployed to harms' way, and all honorably discharged service members.

The commissioned officer presiding over the Oath of Enlistment ceremony raises their right hand and asks the person (s) taking the Oath to raise their right hand and repeat the Oath after him/her. The officer traditionally pauses after each line to allow the members to repeat the preceding line. The oath of enlistment has no expiration and for many, the oath is as binding now as we did when first raising our hand.

"I (name) do solemnly swear (affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the officers appointed over me according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.

Saturday in VFW Life

Loyalty is an element of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Before one may become a member of the VFW it is necessary to take a solemn obligation in which there is nothing which will conflict with religious or political belief, your freedom of civilian pursuits or obligations to families.

Sunday in Family Life

Loyalty and Family. Wherever the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved. Trust is an important word. Loyalty and trust are everything. It is the core of what we should be about and what the people around us are about. It is that certain thing that gives a sense of security. The foundation for balanced success begins with loyalty.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Monday Motivation

Loyalty - Soldiers Creed

I am an American Soldier.

I am a member of a team.

I serve the people of the United States and I live the Army values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never quit.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained, and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills.

I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert, and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy, the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

Week Two of Ten

Tuesday Integration of The Value of Duty

“Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In”

Wednesday Defined

Duty as identified in our Military Service.

Army

Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish tasks as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks, and responsibilities — all in constant motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. You fulfill your obligations as a part of your unit every time you resist the temptation to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.

Marine Corps

Marine Corps Values 1 Honor Marines are held to the highest standards, ethically and morally. Respect for others is essential. ... 2 Courage is not the absence of fear. It is the ability to face fear and overcome it. ... 3 Commitment

Navy

Department of the Navy Core Values as in our past, we are dedicated to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment to build the foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based, and victory is achieved.

Air Force

The Air Force Values provide the expectations and standards that all Air Force people are expected to display every day. Our values underpin everything we do. Members of the Air Force are expected to demonstrate the Air Force, values always; at home, at work, and when deployed. Every member is accountable, always.

Coast Guard

Devotion to Duty. We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the successful achievement of our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

Thursday Inspirational "Believe In What You Do - Do what You Believe In."

A duty is a commitment or expectation to perform some action in general or if certain circumstances arise. A duty may arise from a system of ethics or morality, especially in an honor culture. Many duties are created by law, sometimes including a codified punishment or liability for non-performance. Performing one's duty may require some sacrifice of self-interest.

Quotes concerning duty,

"Battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can indulge. It brings out all that is best; it removes all that is base. All men are afraid in battle. The coward is the one who lets his fear overcome his sense of duty. Duty is the essence of manhood." General George S. Patton

"Duty, Honor, Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be." General Douglas MacArthur

"Do your duty in all things, like the old Puritan. You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less." General Robert E. Lee

Friday in Military Life

Duty as identified in Military Service. Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish tasks as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks, and responsibilities — all in constant motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. Fulfill your obligations as a part of the unit every time temptation is resisted to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.

Saturday in VFW Life

Duty as applied to our membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, a Veteran Service Organization (VSO). As a VSO we are about more than brick and mortar locations. Our post homes and wherever VFW members meet is a place that should be humbly respected because it is where warriors gather, and heroes meet.

You are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States if you are an individual who served honorably as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, in a foreign war, insurrection, or expedition in service that has been recognized as campaign-medal service, and is governed by the authorization of the award of a campaign badge by the United States Government; on the Korean peninsula or in territorial waters for at least 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 days, after June 30, 1949 or in an area which entitled the individual to receive special pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger under section 310 of title 37

Sunday in Family Life

Duty as it relates to our family, community, our nation defies description and calculation. One of the best ways examples of learning lesson as it relates to the inter-relationships of the family, community and our nation is simply to see "family" images. For those of us who served, family takes on a whole different context.

Home is where we find ourselves stationed, and sometimes because of the dangers, we endure unaccompanied assignments and so for the service member he or she is now temporarily a member of a unique family. And, for loved ones left at home, that place where we were, neighbors, families of others whose spouse was deployed now become part of our family as we are of theirs.

For me, and I am sure there are many like me, the journey preparing me to meet the demands of my duties, to family, community, and nation, began long before entering service. The military only deepened the foundation of my upbringing and welded the values upon my heart. The day I take my last breath, is when I will stop caring for those who gave the last full measure of devotion and all that followed. "Believe In What You Do - Do what You Believe In".

I take that as a duty and a debt. A therapist once told me I would never be able to repay the debt for the freedoms we have. In my heart of hearts, I know that to be true, but then again maybe, just maybe, If I "Believe In What I Do – Do What I Believe In" I may be able to help at least someone.

Monday Motivation

May your motivation to do your duty be to live the life for which you were created, to be the best you can be. To integrate duty, it will require incorporating each of the remaining values.

Week Three of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Respect

Wednesday Defined

Respect, also called esteem, is a positive feeling or action shown towards someone or something considered important or held in high esteem or regard. It conveys a sense of admiration for good or valuable qualities. And it is also the process of honoring someone by exhibiting care, concern, or consideration for their needs or feelings.

This is how the branches of our military approach the value of RESPECT.

Army

Treat people as they should be treated. In the Soldier's Code, we pledge to "treat others with dignity and respect while expecting others to do the same." Respect is what allows us to appreciate the best in other people. Respect is trusting that all people have done their jobs and fulfilled their duty. And self-respect is a vital ingredient with the Army value of respect, which results from knowing you have put forth your best effort. The Army is one team and each of us has something to contribute.

Marine Corps

This is the bedrock of our character. It is the quality that empowers Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior: to never lie, cheat, or steal; to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity; and to have respect and concern for each other.

Navy

Integrity is the foundation of our conduct; respect for others is fundamental to our character; decisive leadership is crucial to our success.

Air Force

Integrity is the single most important part of character. It makes Airmen who they are and what they stand for and is as much a part of their professional reputation as their ability to fly or fix jets, operate a computer network, repair a runway, or defend an airbase.

Coast Guard

We value our diverse workforce. We treat each other with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We encourage individual opportunity and growth. We encourage creativity through empowerment. We work as a team.

Thursday Inspirations

Thursday is a day to inspire. I can think of no better way than to share inspirational quotes about this week's value subject, RESPECT.

“When we treat people merely as they are, they will remain as they are. When we treat them as if they were what they should be, they will become what they could be.”

Thomas S. Monson

“I’m not concerned with your liking or disliking me... All I ask is that you respect me as a human being.” Jackie Robinson

**"The best thing to give your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart' to a child, a good example; to a father, deference; to a mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself respect; to all others, charity."
Benjamin Franklin Respect is earned, not given.**

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Friday in Military Service

How our military service integrates the value of respect in the performance of our duties. In the Soldier's Code, we pledge to "treat others with dignity and respect while expecting others to do the same." Respect is trusting that all have done their jobs and fulfilled their duty. And self-respect is a vital ingredient with the value of respect. It results from knowing you have put forth your best effort to be the best you can be.

Paraphrasing one of the inspirational quotes from yesterday's posting, "when we treat people as they are, they will remain as they are. When we treat them as if they were what they should be.....they will become what they could be." BE THE DIFFERENCE

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Saturday in VFW Life

Within the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the Unites States there are numerous ways to show respect including awards and certificates at every level beginning at the Post, District, Department and National. When achievement is recognized as a show of respect it is extremely meaningful when it is presented out of a sense of selfless service. To do things because it is the right thing to do is, in and of itself, something to be appreciated. But when honor is bestowed recognizing the service, accept it humbly acknowledging that we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Let gratitude be your attitude.

The overseas cap is the official cover to be worn at meetings. The hat is "brown" in color but there are additional covers that are for specific achievement such as All State Team and All-American Team. All State covers are a white lower panel with a brown upper panel, All American covers for the post are a blue lower panel and red upper panel, The All-American District covers are a white lower panel with a red upper panel. The All-American Department cover is white lower panel with a blue upper panel.

The Overseas Cap (basic cover) has a corresponding trim color which indicates the level of the organization which the individual is representing. The gold trim is worn by members of a post. The green trim is worn by officers of a district. The red trim is worn by officers of a Department and the silver trim is worn by officers of the National organization. The historic and traditional overseas cover is worn because it was the first recognition of an overseas/combat deployment. Its historic traditions remain in high esteem in the only service organization dedicated to combat veterans.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Sunday in Family Life

And I cannot think of a more appropriate gesture on this day, than reflecting on the value of RESPECT as it relates to our families by wishing each one of you a Happy Valentine's Day.

Monday Motivation and the value of RESPECT

Respect.....to get it, one must earn it. As in winning, earning respect is not a one-time thing. It is an all the time thing.... a habit. One of the most effective ways to earn the respect of others is a result of a formula I like to call "feel", "felt", "found". Many, feel respect is realized when associating with other individuals who are respected. They felt by being associated with persons of high character and ethical standards, they found an increase in their own inner sense of self-respect. And, in that association and increase in their own newly discovered self-respect they soon found respect from others.

As respect is earned your ability to influence is often increased. The more you are respected the more influence you command. Leadership is about influence, that is followership. If you lack the capability to influence others you have no one to lead. To lead effectively, you must first earn the respect of others.

Week Four of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Selfless Service

Wednesday Reflecting on the value of SELFLESS SERVICE as defined

Wikipedia Selfless Service is a service that is performed without any expectation of result or award for performing it. Such services can be performed to benefit other human beings or society.

As defined by the military branches of service

Army

Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own. Selfless service is larger than just one person. In serving your country, you are doing your duty loyally without thought of recognition or gain. The basic building block of selfless service is the commitment of each team member to go a little further, endure a little longer, and look a little closer to see how he or she can add to the effort.

Air Force

As an Air Force core value, service is not about the Air Force institution. It is always about an enduring commitment and dedication of the individual to the age-old military virtue of selfless dedication to duty and in all circumstances. This includes putting one's life at risk if called to do so. How do you see the aspect of Selfless Service in your relationship as it reflects on membership and in your daily life?

Thursday Inspirational quotes reflecting on the value of SELFLESS SERVICE

"To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity". Douglas Adams

"You have chosen to risk your lives for the defense of this country. I will not insult you by saying that you are dedicated to selfless service--it is not a virtue in my morality. In my morality, the defense of one's country means that a man is personally unwilling to live as the conquered slave of any enemy, foreign or domestic. This is an enormous virtue." Ayn Rand

"The willingness of our citizens to give freely and unselfishly of themselves, even their lives in defense of our democratic principles, gives this great Nation continued strength and vitality". Ronald Reagan

Friday in Military service and the value of SELFLESS SERVICE in the military

Selfless service is a part of our daily lives as members of the military and, as with most things, becomes a habit from repetition. The difference between simply performing our duty and selfless service is an attitude.

When you go about your tasks you do them in such a manner without regard for personal recognition or profit, that is with sincerity and integrity. Your actions become second nature. It is simply another way to execute the mantra of "Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In."

Today is a good day for you to reflect on your motivations for what you do. I think you will be amazed at what you do without thought, but rather do them out of habit.....the habit of Selfless Service.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Saturday in VFW Life. The value of SELFLESS SERVICE as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

The description of our organization, a Veteran Service Organization indicates the need for an attitude of selfless service from our members. In addition to being a Veteran organization, we are a volunteer organization. Giving back is in the DNA of those who have borne the battle and made it home. "Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Sunday in Family Life

The value of SELFLESS SERVICE in our family life

Selfless Service that we learned about in the military help to reinforce the foundations of service we learned in the family. Comparisons such as "love is natural - hate is learned", so is learning to serve others, that is to Do unto Others as you would have them do unto you.

Monday Motivation

The value of SELFLESS SERVICE as a motivator.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the only veteran service organization founded on behalf of combat veterans. Founded over 122 years ago our focus remains and that is one, to care for the veteran, surviving spouse and orphaned children and two, to diligently advocate on their behalf to insure, the promises made are the promises fulfilled by this nation for their service.

To the ABCs of Membership, the poem "And Then Some" has been adapted to serve as a mentoring tool for members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Its' relationship is to the values learned when we entered military service and implemented daily.

And Then Some

*These three little words are the secret to selfless service...
They are the difference between average members and the
top members in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
The top members always do what is expected of them...*

And Then Some...

They are mission oriented and driven to succeed...

And Then Some...

*They meet their obligation and responsibilities,
fairly and squarely. They lead from the front, are relentless...*

And Then Some...

They can be called on and counted on in an emergency...

And Then Some...

*I am thankful for members such as this,
For they make life better for veterans and their families.
Their spirit of selfless service is summed-up.
In these three little words...*

And Then Some.

*Original author Carl Holmes
Adapted by Al Lipphardt for the
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United State*

Week Five of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Honor "Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Wednesday Honor Defined, A good name or public esteem, REPUTATION. A showing of usually merited respect, RECOGNITION.

HONOR is the idea of a bond between an individual and a society - as a quality of a person that is of a personal ethos, that represents itself as a code of conduct - and has various elements such as valor, chivalry, honesty, and compassion.

It is an abstract concept entailing a perceived quality of worthiness and respectability that affects both the social standing and the self-evaluation of an individual or institution such as a family, military, or quasi military organization like the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Army

The Nation's highest military award is The Medal of Honor. This award goes to Soldiers who make honor a matter of daily living — Soldiers who develop the habit of being honorable and solidify that habit with every value choice they make. Honor is a matter of carrying out, acting, and living the values of respect, duty, loyalty, selfless service, integrity, and personal courage in everything you do.

Marine Corps

Values Honor Marines are held to the highest standards, ethically and morally. Respect for others is essential.

Navy

We are professional Sailors and Civilians - a diverse and agile force exemplifying the highest standards of service to our Nation, at home and abroad, at sea and ashore.

Air Force

This core value demands Airmen constantly strive to perform at their best. It is a commitment to high standards and an understanding that each Airman has been entrusted with our nation's security. Airmen understand the Air Force mission is extraordinarily complex and exists in a constantly changing world.

Coast Guard

Integrity is our standard. We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all our personal actions. We are loyal and accountable to the public trust As in our past, we are dedicated to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment to build the foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based, and victory is achieved.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Thursday Inspirational

Inspirational quotes and reflections relating to the value of HONOR in our military, VFW, and daily lives.

The Medal of Honor is the United States Armed Forces highest and most-prestigious military decoration that may be awarded to recognize American soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen, and coast guardsmen who have distinguished themselves by acts of valor. Awarded for Conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty.

“It doesn’t take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle.” — General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

“It is a proud privilege to be a soldier – a good soldier ... [with] discipline, self-respect, pride in his unit and his country, a high sense of duty and obligation to comrades and to his superiors, and a self-confidence born of demonstrated ability.” — George S. Patton Jr.

“On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.” – Dan Lipinski

Friday in Military Life

Reflections on the value of HONOR in our military life. Honor is reflected in every aspect of our military service. Whenever we applied the values of our military service it also reflected honor upon the recipient as well as the act itself. The foundation of our values is as old as time.....it is found in what is commonly referred to as the Golden Rule from the Gospel of Matthew 7:12

“Therefore, all things whatsoever ye that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law of the prophets.” (King James Version)

Saturday in our VFW Life

Reflections on the value of HONOR in our VFW life. Honor in the Veterans of Foreign Wars has much to do with the purpose of our Congressional Charter and our programs.

Our VFW programs are defined under two categories: Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities and Veterans & Military Support. For this week's reflection on the value of HONOR, The ABCs of Membership a Mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders, our Core programs are introduced.

Our core programs within the Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities (CYSA) include our scholarship programs; Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen, the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year program, Scouting, and "Buddy Poppy ". Under the CYSA umbrella is called Special Projects and Activities (SPA), which cover Americanism, volunteer recognition, community service, awards and recognition and other miscellaneous youth activities.

"The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational". Chapter 2 of the ABC's of Membership will be an in-depth look at the purpose of our corporation for a second ten week series on our purpose to preserve and strengthen comradeship amongst our members, to assist worthy comrades, to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, to assist the surviving spouses and orphans, to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws, to foster true patriotism, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies."

Sunday in Family Life

Monday Motivation

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

To me there is nothing more motivational in showing honor than images of those who stand watch over the tomb of the unknowns. From the extremes of heat and the cold, from the sunniest of skies to the most horrific of rain, sleet, snow, ice, wind, or combination of all storms there is a guard manning their post with the highest degree of respect, discipline, and dedication. May we all seek to show honor in much the same way.

Week Six of Ten

Tuesday and the subject matter for week six is INTEGRITY. Perhaps the most critical of our values as everything we do is dependent upon our words followed by our actions. There is no middle ground.

Take away from this series what you will on the values learned upon entering military service. May you use them to enhance your service in uniform, in your membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and in your family and business relationships.

We are in the process of creating and producing these mentoring segments in an easy-to-follow electronic media format and in printed form that both will be available free. This effort is an obligation and a responsibility of those of us who have, over time and experience, gained the knowledge to assist others in preparation for their assumption of leadership.

No matter who you are or where you come from, we all stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Take advantage of our wisdom now. Implement as it fits into your vision.

May God continue to bless you in all things, but especially may HE fill you to capacity with the spirit of Commitment, Credibility, and Courage; And may you receive the grace to live the life for which you were created and that is to be the best you can be.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Wednesday Defined

Week Six - Defining INTEGRITY. The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

Integrity is the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions. The word integrity evolved from the Latin adjective integer, meaning whole or complete. In this context, integrity is the inner sense of "wholeness" deriving from qualities such as honesty and consistency of character.

As such, one may judge that other "have integrity" to the extent that they act according to the values, beliefs, and principles they claim to hold.

The Value of INTEGRITY in the military Army

Do what's right, legally and morally. Integrity is a quality you develop by adhering to moral principles. It requires that you do and say nothing that deceives others. As your integrity grows, so does the trust others place in you. The more choices you make based on integrity, the more this highly prized value will affect your relationships with family and friends, and, finally, the fundamental acceptance of yourself.

Marine Corps.

This is the bedrock of our character. It is the quality that empowers Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior: to never lie, cheat, or steal; to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity; and to have respect and concern for each other.

Navy

Integrity is the foundation of our conduct; respect for others is fundamental to our character; decisive leadership is crucial to our success.

Air Force

The professional Air Force ethic consists of three fundamental and enduring values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. He or she must fully internalize these values to be better prepared in all situations—to maintain integrity, to serve others before self, to perform with excellence and to encourage others to do the same.

Coast Guard

Integrity is our standard. We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all our personal actions. We are loyal and accountable to the public trust.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Thursday Inspirational

Integrity should be the cornerstone of all we do. Having the courage of our convictions to stand strong against the immoral, the illegal, and ignorance. Knowing what is right and doing what is right should be as one, not be at odds. There is never a wrong time to do the right thing. When you undertake any endeavor begin by asking, "Is it the truth?"

Quotes from military leaders about Integrity.

"Without virtue, and without integrity, the finest talents and the most brilliant accomplishments can never gain the respect, and conciliate the esteem, of the truly valuable part of mankind". General George Washington

"A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent." General Douglas MacArthur

"Dependability, integrity, the characteristic of never knowingly doing anything wrong, that you would never cheat anyone, that you would give everybody a fair deal. Character is a sort of an all-inclusive thing. If a man has character, everyone has confidence in him." General Omar Bradley

"The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it. Do what is right, not what you think the high headquarters wants or what you think will make you look good." General Norman Schwarzkopf

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Friday in Military Life

The application of integrity in military service is the norm and not the exception. There is not a request it is a demand. The day we raised our hand and took the oath of enlistment we pledged our word to the tenants of that oath. No branch of service is better than the members in it. To be a good member one must have discipline, self-confidence, self-respect, pride in the unit and pride in our country.

Integrity demands discipline, The dictionary defines discipline as training which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects. Integrity therefore is required to make a person a decent, honest, and valuable member of unit. In business integrity (discipline) is required to make a living from one's chosen profession. In an army integrity (discipline) is required to save lives. General Schwarzkopf is attributed with saying "leadership is about a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy" Your word is your bond. Integrity cannot be purchased.

Always be the individual you were created to be and that is to be the best you can be.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Saturday in our VFW Life

Applying the value of INTEGRITY as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our relationships with our comrades, to the responsibilities of membership. The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a Congressionally Chartered fraternal organization. Formed in 1899 by those combat veterans who served in the Spanish American War and Chartered by Congress in 1936 our founding principles remain the pillar of our purpose. These are to care for the veteran, their spouse, and orphaned children and to advocate on their behalf in the Halls of Congress.

You will do well to recall Section 230102 of our Congressional Charter to wit "The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies."

To meet these obligations our Congressional Charter includes Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. Before you become a member one must take a solemn obligation in which you are assured there is nothing which will conflict with your religious or political belief, your freedom of civilian pursuits or obligation to your family. As a fraternal organization our membership in an annual convention adopt changes to our Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual as adopted by the body present. For this reason, it is most important to obtain a copy of the most recent publication resulting from the Convention.

As suggested previously consider adopting a personal litmus test of your action based upon four simple but complex questions of the things you think, say, or do.

- 1 Is it the truth?**
- 2 Is it fair to all concerned?**
- 3 Will it build goodwill and better friendships?**
- 4 Will it be beneficial to all concerned?**

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Sunday in Family Life

Motivational Monday and day seven, the last day of week six

For the past week we have reviewed the value of INTEGRITY and the role it plays in our military, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and personal lives. We have come to learn that without integrity success is not sustainable.

As with any structure a strong foundation must be created to begin building. So, it is with our relationships with fellow comrades in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. As we go about the task of seeking to meet the purpose of our organization, we must ask ourselves four basic questions, which when answered in the affirmative will lay the groundwork for success.

Much of what was learned after leaving military service is attributed to my joining the world's oldest international service organization for like-minded individuals who understood the significance of INTEGRITY in life beyond the military and the need to serve others. It was a response to the question of why I was spared. I chose to be the voice of those who never came home. Lessons learned and opportunities for personal and professional growth through that association have enabled the realization true satisfaction in life is achieved through service to others and to be sustainable must be based on truth.

May your involvement in the Veterans of Foreign wars be a path that will bring you much satisfaction and understanding of how critical INTEGRITY is to your personal and professional life.

Week Seven of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Personal Courage

Our focus this week is on the value of PERSONAL COURAGE, something we all experienced when we raised our hand and took the oath of enlistment. That value was again verified when we were deployed to combat. Personal Courage makes the Veterans of Foreign Wars the outstanding Veteran Service Organization it is today by our continued willingness to stand up for those who no longer have a voice, ensuring promises made are kept by Congress.

Personal Courage is defined on Wednesday. Thursday quotes reflect on experiences engaging personal courage. Friday is RED “remembering everyone deployed”. Saturday is integration of the value of personal courage as a VFW member. Sunday courage is presented in relationship to our family and community life. Monday.... Monday is motivational Monday to start your week confident in reliance on personal courage to see you through any challenge.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Wednesday Personal Courage Defined the adjective "personal" affecting or belonging to a particular person rather than to anyone else. The common definition of the word "courage" is (Noun)" The ability to do something that frightens one." It originates from Middle English Simply stated, courage is commonly defined as being motivated from the heart.

Army

Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral). Personal courage has long been associated with our Army. With physical courage, it is a matter of enduring physical duress and at times risking personal safety. Facing moral fear or adversity may be a long, slow process of continuing forward on the right path, especially if taking those actions is not popular with others. You can build your personal courage by daily standing up for and acting upon the things that you know are honorable.

Marine Corps

Courage The heart of our Core Values, courage is the mental, moral, and physical strength ingrained in Marines that sees them through the challenges of combat and the mastery of fear, and to do what is right, to adhere to a higher standard of personal conduct, to lead by example, and to make tough decisions under stress and pressure.

Navy

We are patriots, forged by the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. In times of war and peace, our actions reflect our proud heritage and tradition. We defend our Nation and prevail in the face of adversity with strength, determination, and dignity.

Air Force

This core value demands Airmen constantly strive to perform at their best. It is a commitment to high standards and an understanding that each Airman has been entrusted with our nation's security. Airmen understand the Air Force mission is complex and exists in a constantly changing world. They understand that all efforts in planning and executing airpower are designed to ensure the national security interests of the United States.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Coast Guard

We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the successful achievement of our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

Thursday Inspirational quotes and reflections on the value of PERSONAL COURAGE and integration into our daily lives. May these few quotes provide inspiration as you encounter the challenges of today and days to come. Take solace in the fact you are not alone. Never be afraid to seek help.

“Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can’t practice any other virtue consistently.” — Maya Angelou Quotes On Courage

“Success is not final; failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen. - Winston Churchill

Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home, and think about it. Go out and get busy. - Dale Carnegie

A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. — Douglas MacArthur

Friday in Military Life Personal Courage.....should be second nature to those who wear the fabric of our nation. Courage, especially on the battlefield, is expected. Those who serve do not view courage as heroic, but rather simply doing our "job". It is what we train to do. Every day we train, we train, we train so when the time comes to act, we do so without thought. It becomes a response to what we were trained to do. I submit those who serve in the military are not peacekeepers as our politicians would have you believe. The military is trained to close with and destroy the enemies of this nation in close combat. We are warriors and as such peacemakers. Making the peace is not achieved without consequences. The military protects and defends while law enforcement protects and serves. The deployment of our men and women into combat should be a last resort because brave men and women will die.

But they die knowing they offered the last full measure of devotion to this nation so future generations might have the freedom's all men and women seek. But personal courage in the military refers to the moral code that everyone in uniform is expected to live by and that is to stand strong having the courage of our convictions when living our values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.

Saturday in VFW Life

The value of Personal Courage carries over into our VFW membership as our moral commitment is on display in our daily actions. As members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars we pledged to abide by our National By-Laws approved and enacted by the most powerful authority in the VFW and that is we the members at our annual convention.

Recall, if you will, the definition of Personal Courage from Wednesday of week seven of the mentoring/orientation series. Personal Courage definition. "The adjective "personal" references affecting or belonging to a particular person rather than to anyone else. The common definition of the word "courage" is, "The ability to do something that frightens one." It originates from Middle English." Simply stated, courage is commonly defined as being motivated from the heart to do something brave."

Within our pledge upon joining a post we state our member's obligation "I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will comply with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Ritual of this order". That pledge goes on to reflect that we are obliged to live a life of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. As a fraternal organization we are bound by this set of laws. Society today has, in my opinion, lost its sense of morality. We must combat against those who would dishonor themselves and this organization, We must combat against those who would lie, cheat, steal, and bring dishonor upon this organization. These should not be elements of character we seek, but rather what we demand.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Sunday in our Family lives

There are consequences to our actions and only we the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have the courage of our convictions to remove those who would violate our pledge. Our very survival as an organization is dependent upon our acceptance that the tired excuse of "we've always done it this way" cannot be our way forward to the challenges we face. To grow and thrive we must be innovative, technologically savvy, and made up of men and women, combat veterans, of impeccable character. We owe to those whose shoulders we stand on to live up to the expectations of what it requires to be an honorable comrade. As with all things the solution is quite simple.

“Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In.”

Monday Motivation

“Last but by no means least, courage – moral courage, the courage of one’s convictions, to see things through. The world; is in a constant conspiracy against the brave. It’s the age-old struggle – the roar of the crowd on one side and the voice of your conscience on the other”.

Douglas MacArthur

May you seek to better understand how you may integrate the value of Personal Courage in every aspect of your life. Put courage in perspective knowing courage is not the absence of fear but the realization that there are aspects in your life which require you put fear aside.

Week Eight of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Commitment. Week eight of our ten-week series we will consider the element of commitment as we go about our daily lives. For many, true commitment was not realized until they raised their right hand and took the oath of enlistment.

As we encountered the values learned upon entering service, we soon discovered those values revolved around a central theme COMMITMENT. If the values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage were the spokes on a wheel The hub holding each spoke is commitment.

Coming next week, week nine, we will see how the hub and spokes of the character "wheel" are held in place by the unyielding circle of the rim of devotion. Week ten of the ABCs of Membership, a mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders, Chapter 1 is on the integration of our focus subject value to end this series, is Excellence.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Wednesday Defined

Commitment, (noun) a pledge, a promise, a responsibility. Within the context of the word pledge is a noun meaning promise. Promise is a noun meaning a declaration assuring that one will or will not do something. Responsibility is a noun meaning trustworthiness. Only two branches of the military include Commitment in their stated values, and they are the Marine Corps and the Navy as indicated below.

Marine Corps

Commitment is the spirit of dedication and determination found in every Marine. It is what compels Marines to serve our country and the Corps. Every aspect of life in the Corps shows commitment, from the high standard of excellence to vigilance in training.

Navy

We are a team, disciplined and well-prepared, committed to mission accomplishment. We do not waver in our dedication and accountability to our shipmates and families. We are patriots, forged by the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. We are dedicated to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment to build the foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based, and victory is achieved. Our actions reflect our proud heritage and tradition.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Thursday inspirational quotes on Integrating the value of Commitment in our military, VFW, and family lives.

“The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.” – Vince Lombardi

“There’s a difference between interest and commitment. When you are interested in doing something, you do it only when it is convenient. When you are committed to something, you accept no excuses; only results.” - Kenneth Blanchard

"On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind." - Dan Lipinski

Friday in Military Service

Commitment, (noun) a pledge, a promise, a responsibility. Within the context of the word pledge is a noun meaning promise. Promise, meaning a declaration assuring that one will or will not do something. Responsibility is a noun meaning trustworthiness.

No matter what service, no matter what branch, our commitment began upon the recitation of the oath of enlistment. While you do not find the word commitment in that oath what you do find is a promise. And, the word commitment is a noun meaning a pledge, a promise, a responsibility.

Remember saying the words "and bear true faith and allegiance to the same" following the words "protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic".

Where else do we find a reminder of our pledge and our allegiance? We know it is in our pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Our flag does not belong to the Government of the United States of America as is the case of so many other nations. No, our flag belongs to the people of the United States, not a king or a queen, not a ruler, not a dictator or other monarch. It belongs to us, especially those who have put their lives on the line in harm’s way.

Many are of the opinion the flag waves, not because of the wind, but on the breath of all those who gave the last full measure of devotion so that we may be free. Long may she wave.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Saturday in VFW Life

The definition of the word commitment is solidly embedded in our psyche. It is the very essence if we are to fulfil the purpose of our life. This is because our commitment, our pledge, our promise, our trustworthiness is contingent on our willingness to do whatever it takes to fulfill that commitment.

Our membership begins with a solemn obligation in which there is nothing that will conflict with our religious or political beliefs, freedom of civilian pursuits or obligations to our families. At the beginning of the member's obligation, it required you to say the words, in part, "I do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare" and further into the obligation ends with the words "all this I promise and pledge upon my honor of a true comrade and a citizen of our great republic."

As a member you accepted the purpose of this corporation detailed in Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter issued by the 74th Congress of the United States, May 28, 1936, and last amended by the 113th Congress on December 4, 2014, Title 36 United States Code, Chapter 2301 Sections 230101 and 230102.

The purpose of the corporation will be presented in a future ABC's of Membership, the week mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders in similar in format to this series on the integration of our core values.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Sunday in Family Life

Commitment in our family life is seen in every action we take to ensure the safety, security, and welfare of our family. Those actions in turn ensure the safety, security and welfare of our community and this nation.

Visualize commitment centered in a wheel where the spokes of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage are secured in place in the hub called commitment to the indestructible rim which is unbridled devotion. "No greater love hath a man than to lay down his life for a friend" reflects the last full measure of devotion.

Think of every possible positive attribute you can imagine. Your unconscious actions show your commitment. It is holding the door, a kind word, a smile, putting others first, giving a ride, showing loyalty, being respectful, and there is no end to this list than to say, "Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You" With commitment - anything is possible. Without commitment mediocrity is assured. Attitude is everything. Be the best you can be.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Monday Motivation

MOTIVATIONAL MONDAY - Integrating the value of commitment. The difference of involvement versus commitment is easier to grasp with the simple comparison of the chicken and the pig when contemplating breakfast. The Chicken is involved, the Pig is committed.

Week Nine of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Devotion

In this week's video and segments, we further explore the wheel of values with its seven spokes, hub, and rim. Together they form a value "wheel of excellence".

Our focus this week is on the value of DEVOTION. This value is identified in one of the branches of service and that is the Coast Guard. We will see it defined in tomorrow's segment followed by inspirational thoughts on Thursday, military service on Friday, VFW membership on Saturday, family life on Sunday and complete the topic on Monday with what is intended to be motivation to continue your devotion to all you hold important.

Last week, when visualizing the values, it was suggested, think of a bicycle wheel. Elements of the wheel are seven spokes, loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage. Each spoke is secured in the center of the wheel by a hub. Commitment is at the center, hub, of our values. Spokes extend out from the hub to the rim. The rim symbolizes what it is required to ensure the spokes (values) are secured in the hub. (commitment) surrounded by a resilient rim (devotion). Elements of our wheel are spokes (values) a hub (commitment) and a rim (devotion) and together form the value of excellence.

Wednesday Defined Devotion (NOUN) love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause.

Coast Guard - Devotion to Duty

We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the successful achievement of our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

While the Coast Guard is the only branch of service to specifically refer to devotion in the context of duty, devotion is required when our values are put together. Devotion is a critical element in each of the values such as loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage, and commitment.

When these elements are viewed as a wheel the outer element would be the rim (devotion) the inner element at the center would be the hub (commitment) and the seven individual values would be the spokes. using the elements together, the "Wheel of Excellence" is created

Thursday

Inspirational quotes on the value of DEVOTION in our military, VFW, and family lives.

"Only one who devotes himself to a cause with his whole strength and soul can be a true master. For this reason, mastery demands all of a person". – Albert Einstein

"I decided to devote my life to telling the story because I felt that having survived, I owe something to the dead. and anyone who does not remember betrays them again". – Elie Wiesel

"Whoever benefits his enemy with straightforward intention that man's enemies will soon fold their hands in devotion". – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"I know of nothing more despicable and pathetic than a man who devotes all the hours of the waking day to the making of money for money's sake". – John D. Rockefeller

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In'

Friday in Military Service

Service members apply the military values to our daily lives. One of the ways to insure we maintained focus was devotion to the ideals represented in those values. Recalling the definition of devotion, that is, love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause, it is easy to understand how important it is to mission. objective.

Early on in my Army service I sought to instill, in myself and my fellow soldiers, the "Soldiers Creed" cited below. As you read it is apparent how critical devotion is to being the best, we can be by living a life where you –

"Believe in What You Do - Do What You Believe In".

I am an American Soldier.

I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained, and proficient in my Warrior tasks and drills.

I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself. I am an expert, and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

Saturday in VFW Life Integrating the value of DEVOTION as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

Our VFW National By-laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, devotion and loyalty are cited numerous times to include our Members Obligation, Ritual Prayers, Commemorations and Memorial Dedications.

Our Congressional Charter clearly requires devotion in our purpose as a Fraternal, Patriotic, Historical, Charitable and Educational organization. There are eight calls to action to meet those purposes. Chapter 2 addresses each of these as it relates to new VFW members and emerging leaders.

Sunday Devotion in Family Life “To the family you may be one person but to one person your family may be the world.” “Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In”

**A family is like a circle.
The connection never ends,
and even if at times it breaks,
in time it always mends.**

**A family is like the stars.
Somehow, they are always there.
Families are those who help,
who support and always care?**

**A family is like a book.
The ending's never clear,
but through the pages of the book,
their love is always near.**

**A family is many things.
With endless words that show
who they are and what they do?
and how they teach you, so you know.**

**But do not be weary if it is broken.
or if through time it has been so worn.
Families are like that -
they are split up and always torn.**

**But even if this happens,
your family will always be.
They help define just who you are.
and will be a part of you eternally.**

Source: "family friends' poems"

Monday Motivation It is Motivational Monday.....so get fired up!

Today is a great day to use the occasion of the National Vietnam War Veterans Day as a reflection on what devotion looks like. From the definition we recall devotion to be love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause. I do not think most would include love or enthusiasm when referring to the Vietnam War.

I do believe loyalty toward all who served in that war, certainly applies to the devotion of those who earned the respect and appreciation for their service in uniform. And so, with that said, may I encourage you to take this opportunity to reach out to a Vietnam Veteran and if you have not had a chance to express your appreciation for their devotion to duty, do it today.

Week ten concludes Chapter 1 on the ABCs of Membership a mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders. For ten weeks the focus has been on VFW members and the integration of military values in our membership and family lives.

We have suggested visualization of these values in the form of a wheel with the values representing spokes in the wheel, commitment as the hub in the center of the wheel, surrounded by devotion as the outer rim touching each value.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Week Ten of Ten

Tuesday The Value of Excellence

This is our final segment on the ABCs of Membership Chapter 1, a ten-week series for new members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and emerging leaders on integrating the values we learned upon entering our military branch of service. Week one began with loyalty followed by Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage, Commitment, Devotion and last but certainly not least, Excellence.

I suggested you think of a bicycle wheel with its spokes, hub, and rim. The spokes are seven values (loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage), attached to a hub in the center (commitment) and attached to an outer rim (devotion). Assembled, these form a wheel (excellence). Our hope is that you take these values from our military service and integrate them into your Veterans of Foreign Wars membership and leadership roles. Chapter 1 is published as an electronic version. Plans are to publish a hard copy to refer to from time to time. All are provided at no charge.

We are combat warriors. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is a Veteran Service Organization. As members we have a responsibility to mentor (teach) those who will follow us on the meaning of volunteer service. Chapter 2, our segment in the ABCs of Membership a ten week mentoring series based on the purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Section 230201 and 230102 of our Congressional Charter.

Wednesday Defined

Excellence Noun. the quality of being outstanding or extremely good. The definition of excellence is simply defined as the quality of being outstanding. When you identify the definition of outstanding you will find it described as being exceptional. Seems to me to be shortsighted definitions. For someone's performance to be viewed as one of excellence requires much more than "simply" outstanding. I submit that, for performance to be one of excellence, every aspect of our values must be outstanding.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

In the military only one branch of service specifically lists excellence as a value and that is the Air Force. But the values held by our military branches require loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage be at a level of excellence including commitment and devotion. When our values are each performed in an exceptionally outstanding manner do the results rise to the level of excellence? The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that extra. It is always doing or giving more than is required.

Air Force

Excellence in All We Do

This core value demands Airmen constantly strive to perform at their best. It is a commitment to high standards and an understanding that each Airman has been entrusted with our nation's security. Airmen understand the Air Force mission is complex and exists in a constantly changing world. They understand that all efforts in planning and executing airpower are designed to ensure the national security interests of the United States. Therefore, they must always strive to meet or exceed standards objectively based on mission needs and continuously search for new and innovative ways to successfully accomplish the mission. It is not only a professional obligation but a moral responsibility as well.

Thursday Inspirational

Inspirational quotes on integrating the value of excellence in all we do.

"The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential, these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence." Confucius

Excellence is pursuing and doing the best we can with the gifts and abilities God gives us."

Anonymous

"Excellence is not a gift, but a skill that takes practice. We do not act rightly because we are excellent in fact, we achieve excellence by acting rightly." Plato

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Friday in Military Service

Integration of the value of excellence in our military is confirmed on the battlefield. Excellence confirms victory. While famed coach Vince Lombardi is quoted to have said in his game there is no second place. There is no truer statement in the military. There is not a runner up in battle. There are those who live, and we know them as winners. And there are those who are dead, and we know them as losers. In the military there is no second place. Victory is not some lofty goal but rather it is life or death. That may sound harsh, but it is the reality of war.

Saturday in VFW Life

Seeking to achieve excellence in our VFW efforts is a natural progression of our inclusion of the values learned upon entering service. Excellence is not an act but rather a habit. If you are to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception it is our predominant attitude.

As military veterans we understand the need to adapt the values we learned such as loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage with an unwavering sense of commitment and devotion in our posts, districts, and departments. There is no such thing as perfection, but in striving for perfection we can achieve excellence. Mark Twain said, "Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection". Perhaps better said "Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better and your better is best."

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"

Sunday in Family Life

On this Sunday, our thoughts exceed excellence. May we dwell on the Spirit of Perfection. May you have a blessed and meaningful day of gratitude for the life you have.

Monday Motivation

Motivational Monday could be named Excellence revisited. I say that because this marks the end of Chapter 1, The ABCs of Membership a 10 week mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders on integrating the military values to our VFW and Family lives.

We sincerely appreciate your comments indicating you have enjoyed what you have seen and heard. And really to the point, you appreciated the reminder for each of us to keep these values at the forefront of all we do in our personal and professional lives.

Chapter 2 of the “ABC’s of Membership”, a ten week mentoring series for new VFW members and emerging leaders will focus on the Purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as identified in the Congressional Charter of 1936 as amended. You will learn that the words contained in that charter demand action ensuring the principles established by our founding members, will continue if our nation sends its sons and daughters to war.

"Believe In What You Do - Do What You Believe In"