

Leadership Training Packet

Edward L. Munson, *Leadership for American Army Leaders, 1942* (excerpt)

U.S. Army

“Too much wise-cracking on the part of the leader will also inevitably result in wise-crack replies from his troops. The American soldier is too used to that kind of talk to resist coming back with it if he thinks he can get away with it. He will have reason to think he can get away with it if he is habitually on the receiving end of such remarks.” (page 15)

“Timidity due to lack of experience is the chief cause of this lack of decision, especially in younger officers. Haste is no remedy for such timidity. A decision must be thought out. A habit of rushing ahead blindly merely to be doing something is stupid - and stupidity in battle almost always leads into needless danger and loss. Only by observation, and plenty of practice and effort, and by some intelligent self-analysis, can a leader develop the self-confidence he needs.” (page 25)

“A man who builds up his own self-confidence -- the courage of his convictions, and faith in his ability to carry out what he thinks needs doing -- is rarely possessed of doubt.” (page 25)

“In final analysis, leaders and the troops they lead must above all things have constant practice in the development of initiative so that when the unexpected happens, as it is always doing in war, they will be used to the idea of having to sum things up and having to act with the utmost speed.” (page 32)

“The value of learning lies in its application to future action; the true purpose of training, then, is to prepare for a rapid and efficient adjustment to any new situation of war. The discipline, citizenship, and vocational training to be gained in military service are unquestionably of high value to the soldier and to the nation - but these things must either be inherent in military training or else by-products of it. For the ultimate goal of military training is to increase the proportion of the known to the unknown in preparing for the situations that will be encountered in battle. Military training itself is an effort to secure desired responses when future military conditions are presented.” (page 74)

“Training thus confers an ability to be more or less mechanical in the execution of acts. It makes the horrors and hardships of war much less noticeable as a result of mental concentration on a fixed purpose. It gives confidence, in that the soldier vaguely recognizes that if his mind becomes confused in combat he has nevertheless so habituated himself to a large variety of experiences that his trained muscles and trained nervous system will still permit him to carry on the task and thus enable his aggressive and defensive powers to continue.” (page 75)

"First of all, an instructor must *know his subject himself*, thoroughly and completely. If he is poorly prepared or partially informed he will fool nobody; he will lose prestige in the eyes of his men - and their attention will unquestionably wander from the subject under discussion to the unpreparedness and lack of knowledge of the instructor himself. Worse, this lack of knowledge will deeply affect his own enthusiasm, and his manner will become self-conscious and diffident rather than interested, alive, and vital, as his manner must be if he hopes to put his training over." (page 77)

"It is perfectly true that in our expanding Army there are thousands of leaders who will realize, as they read the paragraph just preceding, that they have not yet had the time or the training to gain a full knowledge of the many things they must know. Before giving instruction, it is up to such leaders to do everything in their power to acquire all the knowledge they can. This naturally means that they must squeeze in every possible extra hour at night and over week-ends, with the official manuals and other aids, to keep at least one jump ahead of the troops they are instructing." (page 77)

"In final analysis, then, a leader's job is not alone one of housekeeping, of training, of example, of command; it enters just as completely into his men's thinking as into their physical existence. He is their guide, their director, their chief -- their chief in everything from military discipline to, if need be, the final exhortation to the extreme activity, effort, and sacrifice of battle." (page 96)