

## **KEY AREA #3**

### **QUALITY INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP**

1. Leadership is at the very core of military success. Leadership is what turns an armed group of individuals into a cohesive military unit. Good leadership can turn situations, which logically should lead to defeat into victory. Bad leadership can squander even the greatest advantages in position, firepower, equipment, or numbers.
2. Quality Individual Leadership involves technical, tactical, *and personal* competence and an ever-present awareness that subordinates are closely and continually watching the leader's attitudes, words, and actions. The approach to this area complements the tactical and technical skills taught elsewhere with a focus on awareness of self and others.
3. This area is related to all other areas, but most particularly to Team Building, Equal Opportunity, Gender Issues, and Family Concerns.

*Historical example and case study:*

#### **AUDIE MURPHY**

Leadership is the art of influencing others to work together to achieve a common goal. Effective leaders also are concerned about the welfare of their subordinates and will not assign tasks they are unwilling to perform. Audie L. Murphy, America's highly decorated soldier of World War II, demonstrated not only a remarkable level of individual bravery on the battlefield but also quality individual leadership.

Audie Murphy, one of nine children, grew up as a farmboy in northeast Texas and knew deprivation first hand. His father abandoned the family in the early 1930s, and his mother died when he was sixteen. Audie dreamed of becoming a soldier and, following rejections by both the Marines and the paratroops because of his size, joined the infantry in the spring of 1942 at age eighteen. Having learned to shoot and hunt as a boy, he was good with guns and enjoyed drill and training. His stateside battalion commander commented that Audie was the most promising soldier in the entire battalion.

PFC Murphy landed in North Africa in February 1943 with the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, the unit with which he would log more than 500 days of combat. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division conducted four amphibious invasions and participated in ten campaigns. Promoted to sergeant in December 1943 and to staff sergeant in January 1944, Audie blossomed as a combat soldier and leader of small military units during the fighting in Italy. He demonstrated an almost fanatical sense of responsibility, keen senses, good judgment, and a fierce loyalty to his men. When they were fighting in the mountains near Naples, Italy, he carried the pack and rifle of members of his squad who could not keep up the pace. On another occasion he was temporarily bypassed for promotion for refusing to make his exhausted men perform close order drill after just returning from the front lines for a brief rest.

In March 1944 Audie won his first decoration for valor – the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device. During this stage of the fighting in Italy it was important to block the only passable road leading into the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry’s sector. A German Mark VI tank was disabled on the road and destruction of the tank would prevent close armor support to the German infantry. Audie’s battalion commander selected Audie to destroy the tank. Rather than endanger any of his men, who provided covering fire, Audie crept forward and blasted off the tank treads with a grenade launcher. Mission accomplished. During the five month period of mid August 1944 to 26 January 1945, Audie Murphy won the three highest decorations for valor (the Silver Star twice, the Distinguished Service Cross, and the Medal of Honor), was wounded three times, and received a battlefield promotion to second lieutenant.

Audie Murphy was highly praised as a war hero after World War II and entered upon a film career in Hollywood. To the label of war hero Audie replied, “The true heroes, the real heroes, are the boys who fought and died, and never will come home.” Brigadier General Hallett D. Edson, Murphy’s regimental commander for part of the war, said that Audie’s individual exploits were far above and beyond the call of duty but his greatest attribute was his faculty to lead men into battle and inspire them to perform magnificently. Soldiers who served under Audie observed that he drove them forcibly to get the job done, but he was always concerned for their safety. One of his NCOs remarked, “If he ever took you out on patrol, you always came back. He had the right instincts.”

This area is directly supported by the following *suggested lesson plans* contained in this publication:

The Drink  
They Would Have Issued You One  
Prevention of Sexual Harassment  
EO Complaint Procedures  
Racism & Sexism  
Diversity Training  
Religious Accommodation  
Values, Attitudes, Behavior, & Self-awareness  
Communications Process  
Group Development  
Conflict Management  
Professional Ethics  
Alcohol & Drug Abuse  
Soldier Health & Safety Issues

