

## Take in the wisdom of yesteryear's military leaders

By Jeff "Chief" Urbaniak  
COLUMNIST ([www.AdviceChief.com](http://www.AdviceChief.com))

It's hard to grasp what is happening in today's military in the wake of woke policies and character traits. I never thought any of the ridiculous ideologies that are rampant in society would ever affect top-level military leaders the way they have over the past 15 years. Back in the day, decades ago, it always crept in from newcomers but never reached its way up to policy makers and regulation developers.

Today, in the military, we hear of generals lying in order to appease the political elite, regulations allowing for human resource policies that ultimately degrade morale and discipline, and a "milk and cookies" approach to handling discipline issues. It's a mess and recruiting numbers can affirm it. In 2023, military services collectively missed recruiting goals by about 41,000 recruits.

How has it gotten to this point? Poor leadership at the top. If only the leaders of the past could replace the leaders of the present. If only...

In the past, integrity was held in high regard, commitment was rendered to the institution, and most career military professionals loved their craft until the day they retired (and beyond). Today, integrity gets hijacked by agendas, the institution is a testing ground for woke ideologies, and career personnel lack daily motivation and are counting down (and have been counting down) the days until their retirement.

Perhaps a lot of what is happening in the military parallels what is happening

in civilian organizations throughout society (in corporations, institutions, and schools). I can't tell you how many times I've heard a school teacher tell me they can't wait to retire--mainly because they are tired of the educational policies and leadership that create an environment that makes it extremely difficult for teachers to teach. And how is this affecting the students? Well, math and reading scores for 13-year-olds are the lowest they have been in decades. Back in the day, I remember kids being held back a grade if they didn't pass at the end of the school year. Now-a-days, almost everywhere in schools across America, kids advance to the next grade no matter how they performed in the classroom.

The world has become a much different place. Most leaders are puppets and are lacking in too many areas to mention in this column. The leaders I had in yesteryear's military, though, were the best leaders I've ever been around. I wish we could summon them all back into service.

The old military leaders of yesteryear were tough and demanding, and made sure you were trained and equipped to do the job you were expected or called to do. Although initial orders were sometimes met with disdain from the troops (under their breath of course), in the end attitudes and perspectives changed. In the end, the troops felt like they accomplished something (because they did) and they had greater respect for and appreciation of their leaders and the missions they were given. They enjoyed being successful military professionals.

I once read a valuable piece of writing from U.S. Army Sergeant Major Richard Kidd titled: *What Does it Take to be Successful?* He wrote:

*You've got to love being a soldier.*

*You've got to love being around other soldiers.*

*You've got to love leading, training, and caring for soldiers.*

*You've got to be dedicated, motivated, physically fit, mentally alert, morally right, technically and tactically proficient.*

*You must believe in our nation, believe in our army, and believe in your fellow soldier.*

*You've got to be all you can be; and if you're a leader, you have to want the same for all the soldiers in your charge.*

Sergeant Major Kidd's advice can be applied to anyone in any organization. You should love what you do (or at least try to). You should love being around others (or at least realize you need others' cooperation and assistance in order to succeed). You should love guiding, preparing, and caring for those you lead. You should be dedicated, motivated, fit, alert, morally sound, and fully capable. You should believe in your organization and fellow associates. You should always put your best foot forward. And you should want others in your organization to succeed and advance. If you execute all of these "shoulds," you exponentially increase your chances of succeeding.

Yesteryear's military leaders got it right. If you want to succeed at work and in life, tap into their wisdom and knowledge. Find their books, columns, and podcasts and take them all in.

~ The End ~