
The Role and Importance of Discipline in the Military

Discipline is a staple of a competent force and the predominant contributing factor to an effective military. Individual outside stressors and personal issues will have a negative effect on military discipline, and the lack thereof will influence the operational effectiveness of its affiliates. As a Canadian Forces member it is our duty to promote discipline, as well as efficiency and self-control among our own ranks. Together, as a team, we must strive to strengthen our organization and avoid such actions and situations that may hinder or negatively impact our overall performance.

As a military member, it is generally accepted that our line of work is stressful both at home, as well as operationally. We may find that our personal issues, depending on their capacity, are beyond our control and burden our ability to co-operate and function in a professional environment. Additionally, these issues or stresses that persist in our lives may be unperceived to our peers, co-workers, and those with whom we interact on a frequent basis. It is vital that we strive to maintain a sense of self discipline in order to build trust and maintain good order among a course. Self-discipline originates individually, although actively contributes to the collective discipline of the course. It is crucial to formulate a significant attempt at separating our personal life and issues, from our daily activities and duties on the job. A lack of self-discipline and self-control was demonstrated by myself and another member during the course, while unbeknownst to me, personal issues had plagued the member causing him to make a rash decision. A decision and action which otherwise he might not have made. As a result, what was intended as a simple prank between us, led to the events that transpired affecting the entirety of the course. Had I been able to demonstrate stronger self-control, the situation could have been avoided entirely. It would have been possible for me to detect such issues if I had taken the time to recognize them, the situation could have been averted or an alternate outcome and solution could have been found.

At times it may be challenging to identify our personal stressors, manage them, and conduct ourselves accordingly. However, it is crucial that we do our best to remain professional at all times as our actions may have an effect on everyone surrounding us, and potentially when they may depend on us the most such as operationally.

Operational effectiveness depends on a wide variety of factors, some outside of our control, and some within our control. Discipline is a commonality shared among most military and militarized groups. Discipline and standards are set in place to aid in upholding our values, to strengthen our internal bonds with each other, and create a sense of stability in large numbers or groups. A lack of discipline can demonstrate an inability to uphold those values and may create a wavered

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sense of trust and cohesion among co-workers. In order to operate effectively it is necessary for each individual that is part of a team to be on point, and to confide in the rest of the team without any hesitation or doubt. If each team member shares similar views, follows the same regulations that are set out for them, and communicates in a productive manner, the effectiveness of the team as a whole will enhance. The situation between myself and another member has undoubtedly widened the division between the course, and has weakened our overall strength. In the future I intend to be more alert of the problems that others may have, and conscientious of how those other members may be feeling at any given moment, so as not to instigate a situation similar to the past occurrence, but instead attempt to prevent them. For the remainder of the course we must all work together competently and conform to the discipline and standards set out for us. We must look out for each other, and ultimately our duty must come first and foremost to be an operationally effective team.

Our duty is an obligation, but also a commitment to the role that we must serve for ourselves, and those that are around us. As Canadian Forces members, together we must promote discipline, efficiency, strength and self-control. A member of an organized structure must be assigned a certain degree of responsibility, and held accountable to that degree for the decisions that they make and behaviour that they convey. In order to instill a sense of responsibility and confidence, obedience and conformity must be advocated at all times, and upheld by those who are encouraged to do so. These are the keys to which our duty is based upon, and the elements that allow us to operate together as an entity. Coherence of the course must resonate from each of us, and the further that it is endorsed the more likely it is to materialize. Similarly, if unity between course members is dampened or negatively affected, then those effects will be felt by everyone. By failing to uphold my duty to promote discipline, I have in turn failed to encourage it within my course. In the future I aim to recognize this, and make a stronger attempt to instill discipline and self-control among my peers through example. Discipline is a behaviour that changes a group of ordinary individuals into a group of comrades, a group that will follow orders without questioning or floundering about. It is necessary to contribute to the promotion of discipline within our own ranks, and without a constant encouragement of instructors or those who lead us. Doing so will aid in creating superior soldiers, and equally improved technicians, who may understand and make increasingly informed decisions. The ability to make those decisions and resolve situations at the lowest possible level, allows a group of individuals as a whole to become more effective and allows those who lead any such group to focus on more pertinent matters.

Discipline is generally seen as the distinction which sets apart an organized military from an unorganized force. It is imperative to remain professional at all times, to contribute positively to operational effectiveness, and adhere to all of our duties.

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