

Camaraderie: An Antidote To The
Illusions of Fraternalization

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There are few virtues which Aristotle praises more heartily than the virtue of friendship:

The breath of life is friendship,
its' value beyond all goods:
Truth's guardian, Youthful reservoir of noble deeds;
Solace in the loneliness of misfortune's years,
The glue of nations, the bond of citizens near and far;
The passion of lawgivers, dearer than justices' rigor.
Without friendship, nothing lives.¹

With credentials such as these, it is difficult to imagine that anyone could oppose the cultivation of a virtue which apparently has so many benefits. Is it possible that the military community is about to do just that. At first glance, the

¹ These lines represent our summary of Aristotle's larger thoughts upon the subject. He writes as follows:
"...(friendship) is a virtue or implies virtue, and is besides most necessary with a view to living. For without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods...for of what is the use of such prosperity without the opportunity of beneficence, which is exercised chiefly and in its most laudable form towards friends? Or how can prosperity be guarded and preserved without friends?...in poverty and in other misfortunes men think friends are the only refuge. It helps the young too, to keep from error; it aids older people by ministering to their needs and supplementing the activities that are failing from weakness; those in the prime of the life it stimulates to noble actions...it is felt mutually by members of the same race...friendship seems too hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice...and when men are friends they have no need of justice...the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality...(The Basic Works of Aristotle, edited and with introduction by Richard McKeon, (Random House, New York, 1949), from Nicomachean Ethics, Book 8, Chapter 1, p. 1058-59.

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events between juniors and subordinates help to reinforce a sense of community..."⁴ Is it not possible that in the cultivation of the virtue of friendship, there might be found "...the strong bonds needed to build the commitment, esprit, and confidence necessary for mission accomplishment and human self-fulfillment."⁵ Indeed, the history of the military community demonstrates that "...acceptable personal relationships...and proper - social interaction among Officer and Enlisted members has always been encouraged as it enhances unit morale and Esprit De Corps."⁶ But a review of the fraternization policy and a re-reading of Aristotle's thoughts on the virtue of friendship suggests that the military community needs to be challenged into a precise determination of the virtue which appropriately enhances human

QUALITY OF SERVICE LIFE AND TO EFFECTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR DEMANDING MISSIONS.

⁴ DACOWITS, Appendix Z: The Coast Guard Policy-

"Social contact between members of different rank or grade is not inherently inappropriate. On the contrary, appropriate SOCIAL EVENTS BETWEEN SENIORS AND SUBORDINATES HELP TO REINFORCE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY within the Coast Guard family, and are encouraged."

⁵ DACOWITS, Appendix Z: The U. S. Army Policy-

"These policies acknowledge THE STRONG BONDS NEEDED TO BUILD THE COMMITMENT, ESPRIT, AND CONFIDENCE NECESSARY FOR MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT AND HUMAN SELF-FULFILLMENT."

⁶ CNO NAV OP 011/89 OPNAVINST 53702, #3 Background/Discussion, Section A:

"The Navy has historically relied upon custom and tradition to define the bounds of ACCEPTABLE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS among its members. Proper SOCIAL INTERACTION AMONG OFFICER AND ENLISTED MEMBERS HAS ALWAYS BEEN ENCOURAGED AS IT ENHANCES UNIT MORALE AND ESPRIT DE CORPS."

FIGURE ONE
THE VIRTUE OF FRIENDSHIP

<u>LIMITED BY</u>	<u>RESTRICTED TO</u>
LOVABILITY ⁸	OBJECTS WORTHY OF LOVE
RECIPROCITY ⁹	OBJECTS CAPABLE OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSE
UTILITY ¹⁰	OBJECTS SATISFYING A BENEFICIAL SELF-INTEREST
SCARCITY ¹¹	OBJECTS INTRINSICALLY GOOD
EXCLUSIVITY ¹²	FEW OBJECTS, PHYSICALLY PRESENT AND QUANTITATIVELY EQUAL

⁸ ETHICS, Book 8, Chapter 2, page 1059: For Aristotle, the virtue of Friendship is an intellectual virtue, by which he means that the will is moved by the love of the good--perceived to be or actually present--in some object.

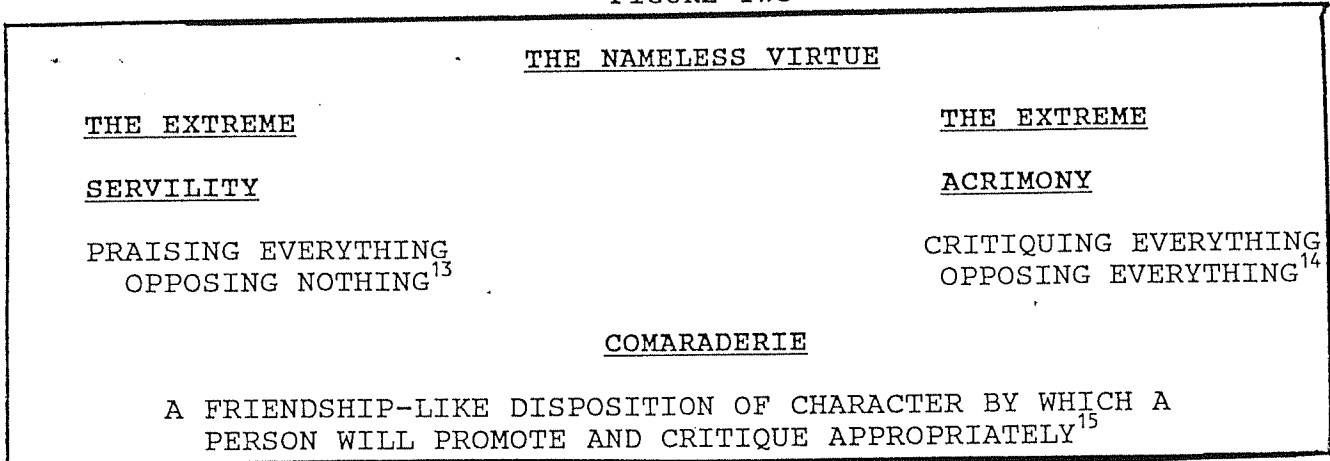
⁹ ETHICS, Book 8, Chapter 2, p. 1060: "Goodwill, when it is reciprocal" is true friendship in Aristotle's vision. This demands that "...to be friends...they must be mutually recognized as bearing goodwill and wishing well to each other..." Thus, Aristotle limits friendship to people who "know their mutual feelings..."

¹⁰ ETHICS, Book 8, Chapter 3, page 1060: While love of "The Good" is essential to Aristotle's understanding of the virtue of Friendship, the various forms of this virtue are directly related to "...the things that are loveable..." Thus, when "The Good" is loved for some benefit to be received--"what is good for me"--this type of friendship Aristotle calls "the friendship of utility."

¹¹ ETHICS Book 8, Chapter 3, page 1061. Aristotle believes that the virtue for which he has so much praise, can infrequently be found. Thus, his eloquent description: "Perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for these wish well alike to each other qua good, and they are good in themselves. Now those who wish well to their friends for their sake are most truly friends;...such friendship is as might be expected permanent, since they meet in it all the qualities that friends should have...love and friendship therefore are found most and in their best form between such men...but it is natural that such friendships should be infrequent; for such men are rare."

¹² Aristotle believes that 1) friendship is limited to geographically proximate objects, for "...if absence is lasting, it seems actually to make men forget their friendship." (ETHICS, Book 8, Chapter 5, page 1063); 2) friendship is excluded from the "sour and elderly" because "they are less good-tempered and enjoy companionship less." (ETHICS, Book 8, Chapter 6, page 1064); 3) friendship cannot be extended to the many, "just as one cannot be in love with many people at once." (ETHICS, Book 8, Chapter 6, page 1064); 4) friendship is limited by "quantitative inequality"--by which he means that "...there is a great interval in respect of virtue or vice, or wealth or anything else between the parties" (ETHICS, Book 8, Chapter 7, page 1066). These four "exclusions" profoundly limit Aristotle's virtue of friendship.

FIGURE TWO



¹³ At the far side of the spectrum is the vice which Aristotle calls "obsequiousness," that is "the giving of pleasure by praising everything and never opposing anything." (ETHICS, Book 4, Chapter 6, page 997). The word "servility" best conveys the sense of "spinelessness" which Aristotle implies.

¹⁴ At the opposite side of the spectrum stands the vice which Aristotle names "contentiousness," that is, "opposing everything and giving plain in every circumstance." (ETHICS, Book 4, Chapter 6, page 997.) The word "acrimony" well conveys the sense of "biting sharpness" which Aristotle implies.

¹⁵ ETHICS, Book 4, Chapter 6, page 997. This "unnamed virtue" is clearly not an intellectual virtue which must respond to "The Good," but a moral virtue which is a "disposition of character." Aristotle writes: "It is not by reason of loving or hating that such a man takes everything in the right way, but by being a man of a certain kind. For he will behave so alike towards those he knows and those he does not know, towards intimates and those who are not so, except that in each of these cases he will behave as is befitting." (ETHICS, Book 4, Chapter 6, page 997). This virtue Aristotle believes, will enable its possessor to "...associate differently with people in high station and with ordinary people, with closer and more distant acquaintances and so too with regard to all other difference, rendering to each class what is befitting..." (ETHICS, Book 4, Chapter 6, page 997). The word "comaraderie" well conveys this descriptive of Aristotle. We have chosen this unusual spelling in order to focus the reader's attention upon the military root of the word. Prior to 1598, the word "camarada" indicated a company of eleven or twelve soldiers who messed and lodged together. This usage derives from a still earlier Spanish word-- "camarada" which meant "one who shares the chamber." The

FIGURE THREE

UNITIVE CHARACTERISTIC PROMOTED

SOCIAL COURTESY:	BY WHICH HIERARCHY IN SOCIETY IS ACCEPTED, RESPECTED, AND FACILITATED. ¹⁶
SOCIAL WORTH:	BY WHICH GOOD WILL IS RENDERED TO EACH AND ALL BECAUSE THEIR VALUE IN THE SOCIETY IS PRESUMED. ¹⁷
SOCIAL PURPOSE:	BY WHICH THE PARTICULAR CONTRIBUTION OF EACH TO THE COMMON PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY IS ACCEPTED. ¹⁸
SERVICE MENTALITY:	BY WHICH THE LOVE OF SELFLESS SERVICE TO THE SOCIAL COMMUNITY IS ENHANCED. ¹⁹

¹⁶ As a disposition of character, the "nameless virtue" is characterized by "friendliness." It is, Aristotle writes " ..that good will which is a friendly sort of relation...toward people whom one does not know, and without their knowing it..." (ETHICS, Book 9, Chapter 5, page 1083). We have chosen to name this "social courtesy."

¹⁷ This friendliness emerges, Aristotle believes, "...on account of some excellence or worth, when one man seems to another beautiful, or brave or something of the sort..." (ETHICS, Book 9, Chapter 5, page 1083). We have decided to call this "social worth."

¹⁸ Aristotle believes that this friendly quality has great importance in the political community, "...for a city is unanimous when men have the same opinion about what is to their interest and choose the same actions, and do what they have resolved in common." (ETHICS, Book 9, Chapter 6, page 1084). Aristotle calls this "political friendship." He writes: "...it (political friendship) is concerned with things that are to our interest and have an influence on our life." (ETHICS, Book 9, Chapter 6, page 1084). We have named this "social purpose."

¹⁹ The final characteristic is what Aristotle calls "...the friendly-like feeling created by the benefactor." It is not the unwholesome relationship between creditor and debtor. Rather, Aristotle believes that it is more like that characteristic of those who "...have done a service to others," and who "...feel friendship and love for those served even if these are not of any use to them and never will be." It is similar to a craftsman who, explains Aristotle, loves the handiwork personally produced much more than should it come alive, it could love its maker! (ETHICS, Book 9 Chapter 7, page 1085). We have called this "service mentality."

FIGURE FOUR

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

FRIENDSHIP

ACCEPTS ONLY THE GOOD AS WORTHY
OF LOVE AND RESPECT

REQUIRES EQUIVALENT RESPONSES

REQUIRES PERSONAL PLEASURE IN
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

LIMITED TO THE VERY FEW

CAMARADERIE

ACCEPTS SOCIAL AND PERSONAL
DIFFERENCES AND RESPONDS
APPROPRIATELY

GRANTS GOOD WILL TO ALL
WITHOUT CONDITIONS

ENHANCES JOY OF PERSONAL
CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMON
PURPOSE

ENJOYED BY THE MANY

Briefly stated, the intellectual virtue of Friendship encourages particularism, whereas the moral virtue of Camaraderie facilitates commonality. In the military community, particularism is the breeding ground of fraternization, while commonality is the root of Camaraderie.²⁰

²⁰ A very interesting article by Robert F. Ober Jr., a retired Foreign Service Officer, well illustrates this thesis with special respect to the Lonetree and U. S. Marines' espionage case in the Moscow Embassy. Mr. Ober reflects upon the change in the atmosphere of the embassy from a "family-based highly motivated community," to "discrete interest groups." In his view, as the sense of cohesive community declined, the possibilities of entrapment increased. He writes: "And what about the Marines? Before October, over the period the espionage allegedly occurred, their number had increased rapidly...instead of being swept up in a family-like community, the Marines constituted a largely autonomous troop. And there has been little connectedness between their group and the other American groups that now dot the embassy landscape." (CF "Demise of the Embassy Family" The Washington Post, 12 May 1987, p. 19A.)

FIGURE FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMMANDERS

- I. "Friendship is a very fragile element of human relationships which is limited to the few, facilitated by persistent personal effort, and nourished by exclusivity. The military environment is a very intense, very fragile human environment which does not easily lend itself to the conditions necessary for authentic friendships. "Failed friendships" are dangerous to the well-being of the military unit and the military mission. Military Commanders should monitor "friendships" within their units.
- II. Leadership styles which promote particularism nourish fraternization. Commanding Officers need to review frequently the sense of commonality present in the Command, and the leadership styles which encourage Camaraderie.
- III. Commanding Officers need to frequently demythologize the false hopes proffered by the masquerade of fraternization, just as they frequently review the physical conditioning of the Command's members. Fraternization negatively affects the Command in a more significant manner than poor physical conditioning.
- IV. Camaraderie adequately creates a human military environment in which social relationships strengthen the integrity of the unit and its members. Commanding Officers need to review the environment in which their members live and work in order to discern the quality provided for healthy social interaction.