



# The Death of the Officer's Club and Impacts on the US Army's Organizational Culture

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# Agenda

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- Research Issue and Overview
- Why did they die?
- Issues to consider
- Organizational Culture
  - Edgar Schein
  - Diversity
  - Letort Papers – zero defect army
- What is an Officer Club?
- Officer Clubs impacts and events
  - Prop Blast, Dining In, Regimental Mess
  - Challenge Coin
  - Positive Organizational Culture
- Recommendations / Conclusion

# Acknowledgments: “it takes a village”

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Commanding  
General NETCOM

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Army War  
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## Research Issue and Overview

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- Investigates the decline of Officer Clubs, identify several examples of events and functions that improve social and professional cohesion and contribute to positive organizational culture
- The fabric of army society and life, family, and officer-centered army culture
- Relationships matter, people first, and mission always

# Death of Officer Clubs

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- Senior leaders impacts
    - DUIs
    - Fraternalization
    - Inappropriate Relationships
    - Alcoholism
      - Moved into the local communities
  - 9-11 Attacks
  - Global War on Terrorism
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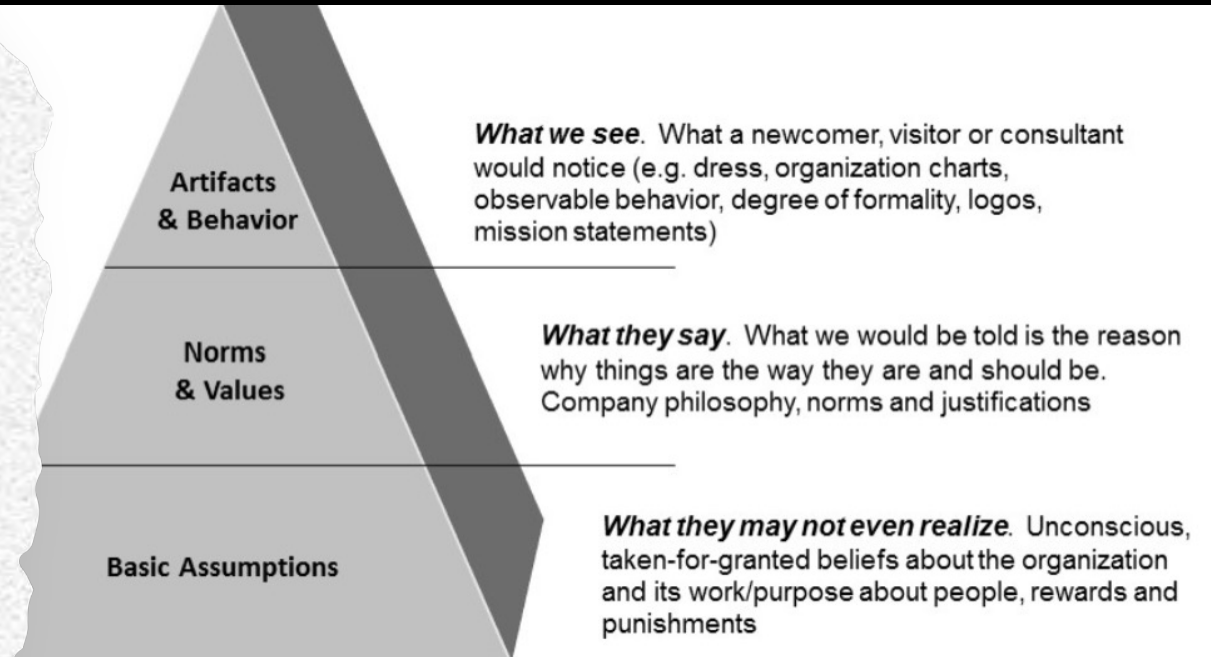


## Issues to Consider

- Professional development
- Fostering relationships
- Isolation of families
- Recruiting and Retention
- Increased divorce rate
- Diminished professional identity
- Loss of mentoring and habituation
- Stability
- New Retirement System
- Spousal professional careers

# Positive Organizational Culture

- Edgar Schein
- Diversity
- Zero defect Army





# What is an Officer Club?

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- Quintessential location for developing and sustaining positive organizational culture in the US Army
- An enlightened social experience
- Proud heritage, aesthetics,
- Ft. Belvoir overlooking the Potomac River





# Officer Club Impacts and Events

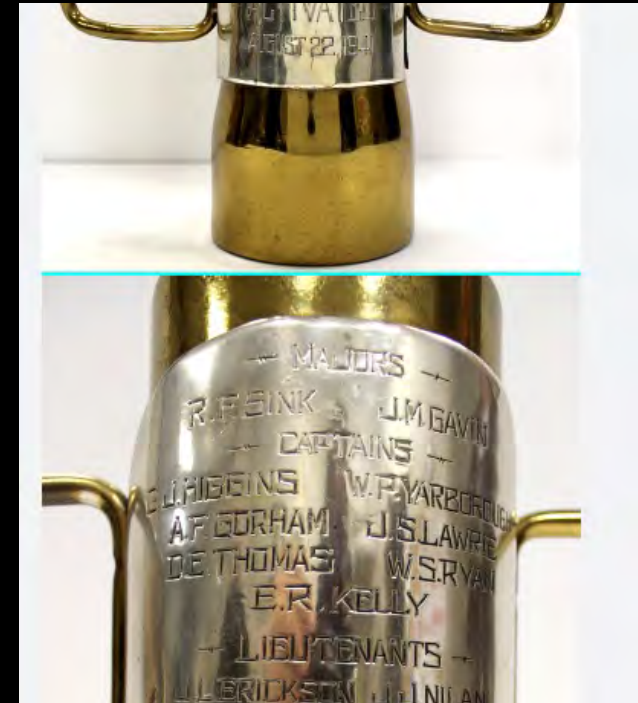
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- Family-focused events
- Social cohesion for married spouses
- Sporty Competition – golf and tennis
- Collaboration, mentorship, coaching, guidance, humanizing of senior officers
- A welcoming environment for all officers, their families, and guests
- Services provided
- Attribute to retaining talent, recruitment, and positive culture



# Rites of Passage

- Prop Blast
- Spur Ride
- Mangadai
  
- Grueling multiday events
- History and traditions
- Hardship brings leaders closer together, misery loves company
- Culminating Ceremony with Family







## Dining In/Out

- Formal Event
- Atmosphere of camaraderie, good fellowship, fun, and social rapport, esprit de corps
- Display rich history and traditions
- Awards, entertainment, and Grog Bowl
- Toasts and remember the fallen





# Regimental Mess

- Regimental Officers semi formal dinner
- Regimental Colors, relics, trophies
- Social atmosphere, build relationships, share ideas, and enjoy fellowship
- Promotes esprit de corps and cordiality
- Learn unit heritage, display artifacts from war, awards and decorations, campaign streamers
- Units honor, prestige, tradition

"... this should be a place where colonel and lieutenant meet in the social equality of gentlemen in that camaraderie and good fellowship which teaches the youngster respect and affection for his seniors, and the elders' kindness and consideration for the junior" - James Moss







## Challenge Coin

- The challenge
- Artifact is kept on person at all times
- Boost morale and esprit de corps
- Proudly display unit logos and emblems
- Presented for exemplary work expectations and membership of the unit
- At the bar, cell phone, head gear rule



# Positive Organizational Culture – What I have learned

- Rituals and Artifacts
- Including families is critical, healthy family = healthy army service
- Relationships matter
- Professional development
- Work life balance – routine through once in a lifetime events
- Officer clubs offer inclusive/exclusive paradigm
  - Inclusive through rituals, conduct, mentoring, rites of passage, social compartment as well as religion, race, and genders
  - Exclusive for members outside of the regiment creating army loyalty and pride



## Recommendations and Conclusion

- The officer club was the nucleus that fostered the mechanisms for a positive organization culture
- Current units have good culture, and they are at the discretion of the leadership
- Commanders' presence and interaction, plant the seeds
- Allocate resources to re-establish the Officer Clubs
- Effective People first organization

Questions?

