

How many of you have seen the Wizard of Oz? Well, being a Drill Sergeant on the trail is somewhat like the movie the Wizard of Oz. Let me explain further. Some Drill Sergeants volunteer and some Drill Sergeants are DA selected, but no matter how they got there they have to drive on continue their mission and stay on the path or our yellow brick road per say. As we all know in the movie the Wizard of Oz the yellow brick road has many turns, many perils and many unexpected events. When you start your journey as a Drill Sergeant you will meet a different group of characters know to us as the volunteer soldier. Unlike the yellow brick road you will not meet these characters individually and they will not tell you what their weaknesses are. You the Drill Sergeant have to find out for yourself who is the lion and lacks courage, which is a scarecrow and is in desperate need of a brain, and your going to find out that the majority of your trainees are tin men and they lack heart and desire. Some of your soldiers may be Dorothy's and just want to go home. The Drill Sergeant just like the Great Oz has all the power. It is their job to ensure that soldiers make it to graduation with tactical and technical proficiency, with a mental and physical fitness and an understanding of the Army values needed to succeed in today's Army. Again like Oz, the Drill Sergeant will not use magic to accomplish their mission, but encourage soldiers to meet their goals.

Now I am not going to lie to you there are some soldiers that unfortunately will receive their ruby slippers and be sent home prior to graduation. There are some soldiers that you may wish you could issue ruby slippers to, but that is the challenge. Motivation and setting the example are the key to building your soldiers courage and desire to accomplish the tasks you set before them. Your biggest asset throughout your journey will be Todo or your battle buddy. He or she can make or break you. A good battle buddy will keep you on the path to success. If you start to stray fro whatever reason your battle buddy is there and in return you are there for them. If you leave the path completely and forget why you are a Drill Sergeant whose primary purpose is to train soldiers that I can guarantee the wicked witch will pay you a visit. Everyone has rules they have to follow and ours is TRADOC Regulation 350-6. You can view the regulation as the wicked witch or the good fairy, but either way the guidelines are there for us to follow.

In conclusion, remember our paths in life are always changing. We must remain flexible. We have Battle buddies

and peers just like Dorothy had Toto. We have rules and orders that we obey for if we don't the wicked witch is sure to get us. We have to be motivated and continue to set the example everyday. Believe it or not everyone is like a bug in a jar. Someone out there looks up to you regardless of your rank. So setting a good example is a must. We have to set goals for ourselves and encourage our soldiers to set goals. Remember that no one is perfect. Leaders have weaknesses too. If you are not sure about something ask? Have the self-discipline to do what is right even when not being supervised. It is exactly what the Army Values are all about. Lead from the front and accept all Challenges.