

The Exhausted Instructor - Guarding the Army Ethic

Adaptation by CW4 Marcus A. Motenez, Special Forces

Old Guy sat slumped at his desk of woe,
His patience worn thin, his energy low.
With papers stacked high, a bureaucratic hill,
He cursed the beast called “administrative skill.”

“Why must I wade through this tedious mire,
Of essays that lack all passion or fire?
Their sentences meander, their grammar’s a joke,
It’s a miracle none of my red pens have broke!”

The students, he thought, were a clueless crowd,
With run-ons and fragments they read out load.
“Their words are hollow, their logic thin-
When did teaching writing become such a sin?”

And oh, the tech-his eternal foe,
A computer that hummed too fast, too slow.
Emails unanswered, slides that froze,
“How do I fix this? Nobody knows!”

But Guy was a soldier, though weary and worn,
Through decades of teaching, his resolve was born.
Though he cursed at screens and sighed at prose,
He still showed up, as each morning rose.

For in every bad draft, there flickered a light,
A student who tried, who got it almost right.
And sometimes a thank-you, a heartfelt plea,
Reminded old Guy why he chose this degree.

So, here's to the instructors, like Guy, who fight,
Through paperwork, nonsense, and endless nights.
May they find their peace, their long-deserved rest,
For teaching is hard—but they give it their best.



Author's Note: "The Army ethic is the set of enduring moral principles, values, beliefs, and laws..." (Department of the Army, 2019). CW4 Montez is the course director for the Special Forces Warrant Officer Intermediate Level Education Department at the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Editor's Note: CW4 Montez presented this poem as a piece of professional advice on behalf of senior warrant officers to those who follow after them.

References

Department of the Army. (2019). Army leadership and the profession (ADP 6-22). https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/adp6_22.pdf