Junior Military Leaders: Values, Skills, and Professional Credibility

Published on 13/12/2025

The current international scenarios and professional work context demand the training of mature Military Leaders capable of facing changing and complex external challenges, often in extreme contexts, and, at the same time, able to lead highly experienced and specialized personnel. In this context, authority cannot be solely "positional" and **only a credible and pragmatic training path** based on actions, skills, and character – can forge the **true authority necessary for Command**. For this reason, the preparation of Junior Military Leaders **transcends the mere acquisition of scientific techniques** or adherence to a rigid and universal training path.

Philosophy as a secular foundation of values: not an ornament, but a foundation

Philosophy is essential not only for **open-mindedness** but especially as a **secular foundation of life values** that a military leader must embody and be able to transmit. In a context where

decision-making power affects people, resources, and rights, **values cannot be a “passing” chapter**: they must become everyday culture.

Among the training pillars, the focus should be on:

- **Courage** (including moral: taking responsibility for the unpopular but right choice),
- **Loyalty** (towards the institution and one's subordinates),
- **Generosity** (ability to give without calculation, even in recognizing merits and protecting the group),
- **Humanity** (respect for the person, dignity, moderation in the use of authority),
- **Integrity** (consistency between rules, decisions, and behaviors),
- **Impartiality** (justice in judgment and opportunities),
- **Fidelity** (to the mission, to the norms, to the founding principles of the State).

This “secular” foundation is what makes authority credible: not the uniform, but the quality of choices.

Junior Military Leaders: values, skills, and professional credibility

Training aimed at real work: the Officer as a State Military Manager

An Academy Officer, in career perspective, is not just a "technician" of military operations: he is, progressively, a **State Military Manager** with **legal-administrative responsibilities**. He manages personnel, public resources, procedures, acts, disciplinary responsibilities, and – in

some cases – direct effects on rights and freedoms.

For this reason, a **Law Degree** is often **preferable**, especially in view of command assignments (for example as **Corps Commanders**) where personnel management and the regulatory framework become central. Knowing the law does not mean “being bureaucrats”: it means being able to command within clear rules, prevent errors, protect the institution and one's men.

The case of the current path in **Strategic Sciences** is different: interesting, but with **secondary utility** compared to widespread operational and administrative needs. It is particularly suitable for a more limited number of roles: in some **General Staff** functions or roles with **external/international** projection. Such paths remain important, but more as **selective specialization** (or subsequent step) than as a generalist base for everyone: many advanced skills can be assigned and consolidated later through targeted master's programs and gradual assignments.

Junior Military Leaders: values, skills, and professional credibility

Key university fields: Information Sciences (including cyber) and Engineering (including space)

Alongside law, there are areas where the university can provide an immediately operational and usable advantage.

Information Sciences / Cyber Communications

Today we no longer speak only of “communications” in the traditional sense: networks, data,

sensors, command and control systems, interoperability, communication resilience are decisive factors. In this framework, the **cyber dimension** is increasingly relevant: defense of digital infrastructures, management of vulnerabilities, network security, informational awareness, countering hybrid threats. Training Officers with solid foundations in this sector means building credibility not only internally but also in comparison with external agencies, suppliers, standards, and regulations.

Engineering / Corps of Engineers (and new space domain)
For the Engineers, engineering is not a "plus": **it is a working language**. Technical planning, safety, field and permanent works, infrastructural logistics, risk assessments, interaction with civil entities: without a robust scientific framework, effectiveness and authority are lost. Moreover, the **new space domain** requires high-level skills: complex systems, satellite communications, geolocation, observation, integration with terrestrial networks and assets. Even without turning everyone into "*space*" specialists, a technically prepared leadership is needed to understand, manage, and integrate these capabilities.

If we want to create **true and credible** professionals, capable of dealing with **external agencies** and with **national regulations and laws**, these paths become strategic.

Technical-military training: a tough, selective, progressive path

Here the issue is broader and more complex, because military leadership is not just knowledge: it is behavior, method, emotional control, the ability to decide and to be followed.

Phase 0 – one year of military instruction only (model "advanced combat course")
Instead of the first "soldier" year in the unit, a **first year exclusively for training** can be planned, based on the **advanced combat course** model, with high standards and a precise goal: **to temper spirit, convictions, discipline, and leadership abilities**. A tough and selective year, where evaluation is not only physical and technical but above all of character: reliability, self-control, the ability to command and be part of the group.

Phase 1 – Three-year academic period (values + targeted university base)
At the end of the training year, one enters the three-year period with a more mature approach: philosophy and values as the axis, and a choice of degree consistent with employment (Law as

the preferable “generalist” option; computer science/cyber and engineering/space as technical fields). **Selection here must remain present**: it is not enough to “pass exams”, leadership standards must be maintained.

Phase 2 – one year post-three-year period: only specialized military subjects
After the three-year period, a **second entirely military year** is introduced, at a specialist level, very demanding and challenging. The logic is simple: to consolidate and “certify” the ability to command in complex contexts, with continuous evaluations and increasing responsibilities.

In this year, everyone will follow their own path related to their Arm/Corps, with distinct programs and high standards: Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, Engineers, Signals, AVES (Army Aviation), Transport and Materials, and other corps/arms according to organizational needs.

Junior Military Leaders: values, skills, and professional credibility

Career-training sequence: master's after platoon command

A key point: some high-level scientific skills make sense when the Officer completes the role of Deputy Company Commander / Platoon Commander and prepares to become a Company Commander with all the associated responsibilities, 120 people - **a medium-sized enterprise**.

Operational Phase – 3 years as Deputy Company Commander / Platoon Commander
After the specialist phase, the Officer for three years takes on the role of **Deputy Company Commander / Platoon Commander**, the first real test bench, where the identity of a leader

and the ability to manage people, training, discipline, operations, and daily life are consolidated.

Advanced Academic Phase – last 2 years (master's degree) after field experience
Only after these three years do the **last two years** become truly effective: the Officer studies with experience, selects useful content, connects theory and reality. In parallel, a specific module for Company Commanders in **Planning and Conducting Operations in differentiated scenarios** is introduced.

Junior Military Leaders: values, skills, and professional credibility

Conclusion: a model that unites Ethics, Competence, and Selection

The proposed model creates a coherent progression in **phases**, where each step prepares the next and consolidates authority in the field:

- **Phase 0:** one year of military training only (advanced combat course model), selective and character-building.
- **Phase 1:** three-year academic period with philosophy/values and a degree aimed at real work (Law as a preferable axis, or computer science/cyber and engineering/space for technical fields).
- **Phase 2:** one post-three-year period of specialized military subjects only, very challenging and at risk of exclusion, differentiated by Arm/Corps.
- **Phase 3:** 3 years as Company Vice Commander / Platoon Commander as an operational and human testing ground.

- **Phase 4:** final 2 years of master's degree after experience, with a specific module for Company Commanders.

Result: More Credible, Competent, and Reliable Officers, because they are built with the same principle they will then demand from their men: high standards, true responsibility, and growth based on concrete evidence.