

A Word from the



Eisenhower with Patton and Bradley, Bastogne.

Chairman

U.S. Army

Since 9/11, the Nation has confronted one of the most demanding challenges in its history. The Armed Forces are a key instrument of national power in winning the global war on terrorism. Although the joint team has technologically superior weapons, command and control systems, and reconnaissance platforms, they owe their success to the talent, dedication, and professionalism of American men and women in uniform. The implication is inescapable: effective leadership is basic to joint warfighting.

It is constructive to reflect on leadership. I have no illusions about being a great leader; but after 37 years in the military, I have seen both

some good and not-so-good leaders. I benefitted by serving on an inspector general team. During that tour, I visited various organizations, and before long I could distinguish an effective unit from a poor one within minutes, and it always came down to the issue of leadership—or sadly the lack of it in some cases.

There are many excellent books on the subject, which often go into great detail on the actions to be taken by leaders. The emphasis is on *what* leaders do. Instead of that approach, I want to focus on *how* leaders operate—the fundamental qualities of good leadership.

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The most basic quality of good leadership is character—an individual's moral excellence and distinguishing ethical integrity. Character, above all, is what allows leaders to be entrusted with the youth of the Nation.

Many Americans, particularly baseball fans, may recall an anecdote about Ted Williams that makes this point. During one of his last seasons, the Red Sox legend had his worst year. Despite being the highest paid major league player, he hit .254, the only year he ever hit under .300. The following season, the Red Sox management sent him the usual contract for \$125,000. He returned it saying that he didn't deserve it. He cut his salary 25 percent for the final year on the team—and subsequently batted a fantastic .322 to end the year.

Williams lived up to the dictum of Henry David Thoreau: "Society does nominally estimate men by their talents—but really knows them by their character." Williams was an admirable athlete with great talent—and his actions demonstrated legendary character.

Americans are not alone in recognizing character. On a recent trip, I met with the leaders of an allied nation. Of the issues that could have arisen—regional security, terrorism, interoperability, or coalition warfare—they wanted to discuss leadership. They regarded the character of leaders as essential to the strategic relationship between our two countries.

There have been many military leaders of great character. One notable example comes out of North Africa during World War II, in the initial major U.S. campaign against German forces. It was the first taste of combat for General Dwight Eisenhower. After some early success, the allied campaign bogged down against the defensive tactics of General Erwin Rommel. Many began to question Eisenhower's level of experience. Some even called for him to be replaced.

Eisenhower was not dismayed. In a letter to his son, he indicated that he would not be upset to return home and revert to his permanent rank of lieutenant colonel. If that happened, he would not consider his career to be a failure because he had been privileged to serve "with men of character." How many of us would measure our service by such a noble standard?

Leaders I've admired the most have reflected that same sense of dedication. When you find leaders with character, there is inevitably a long line waiting to follow them. It comes down to the fact that men and women are willing to follow someone they trust, someone who will treat them fairly, and someone who in turn will be honest with them.



U.S. Navy (Philip McDaniel)

F/A-18E aboard
USS Abraham Lincoln,
Enduring Freedom.

**when you find leaders
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The spirit of selflessness is closely associated with character. One of my favorite stories in this regard is about General Henry (“Hap”) Arnold. During the 1920s, General William (“Billy”) Mitchell became an outspoken advocate for airpower, which eventually led to court martial. Arnold decided to testify in Mitchell’s defense, despite the contrary advice of senior officers. As a result, Arnold was exiled to Fort Riley and told that he would not be selected for advanced professional military education. This signaled the end of his career as an airman.

Shortly after arriving in Kansas, Arnold was contacted by an upstart airline called Pan Am. They offered him a job—not as a pilot, but as president. Arnold faced a tough decision: to stay in the Army with no future or accept a promising business opportunity. He remained in the service. His sense of selflessness—putting the interests of the Nation and his fellow soldiers ahead of his own career—motivated him to stay. In my view, that quality of leadership was instrumental in

Arnold later becoming commanding general of Army Air Forces and earning a fifth star.

Loyalty is another quality of leadership and is what causes men and women to subordinate their interests to those of the organization. It is a powerful way for leaders to inspire others. It heartens troops to reciprocate and follow their leaders up the hill in a hail of bullets or through airspace filled with anti-aircraft fire and surface-to-air missiles.

During the buildup to the Gulf War in 1991, the press labeled General Colin Powell, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, as a “reluctant warrior.” After a particularly unflattering article was published in *The Washington Post*, the President was asked what he thought of Powell. He replied: “Nobody’s going to drive a wedge between [him] and me. I don’t care what kind of book they’ve got, how many unnamed sources they have, and how many quotes they put in the mouth of somebody when they really weren’t there.”

The President had iterated what those of us in uniform have long appreciated. Something



DOD (R. D. Ward)

**Bush and Powell,
August 1990.**

the final quality of leadership is that good leaders delegate wisely

that General George Patton captured when he remarked, “There is a great deal of talk about loyalty from the bottom to the top. Loyalty from the top down is even more necessary.” Whether one commands a battalion, ship, or squadron, a leader should never have to apologize to anyone in the chain of command for the commitment to this quality.

Leaders must also demonstrate moral courage. It may involve professional risk to speak up and do what is right. Effective leaders do not quietly stand by and watch as their contemporaries or superiors make mistakes.

A famous instance of moral courage occurred during World War I. A young Army captain in France named George Marshall was directed to assemble a division for an inspection by General John (“Black Jack”) Pershing. Unfortunately, the division was spread over 30 miles. The soldiers had to march throughout the night to reach the parade ground. Making matters worse, the field was ankle-deep in mud. The unit was dirty, tired,

and ragged. Pershing was furious and proceeded to rebuke the division commander.

Marshall believed Pershing was unaware of all the facts. He stepped up and explained to Pershing why things had gone wrong. When Pershing turned to walk away, Marshall grabbed his arm and insisted on finishing the explanation. Marshall expected as a result that his career was over. But just the opposite happened. Pershing started taking him on all inspections of the troops and eventually made him his chief of staff. After all, when American lives are at stake, great leaders have little use for either yes-men or yes-women as advisers.

The final quality of leadership that I want to mention is that good leaders delegate wisely. They realize that they cannot do everything. They trust and empower their people. I see this occur every day as I count on the skills and expertise of some 1,200 talented officers, enlisted personnel, and civilians on the Joint Staff.

As one assumes senior leadership positions, this becomes readily apparent. In June 1944, after



U.S. Army

Pershing with Marshall
(in rear) sailing home.

General Eisenhower gave the order to launch the invasion of Europe, he retired to his quarters and played chess with his driver. The next morning, his aide found him in bed reading a western novel. Later, on getting an update from his operations center, Eisenhower visited component commanders and listened to their reports.

In contrast, Adolf Hitler immersed himself in tactical details. When Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt asked for two armor divisions as reinforcements against the Allied airborne assault, the request was delayed until it could be approved by the Fuhrer himself. Twelve hours were lost in the process. Moreover, the weather cleared during the delay, permitting the Allies to decimate German armor before it could join the battle. Hitler's distrust and micromanagement prevented his generals from accomplishing their mission.

These styles of leadership stand in sharp contrast. The Supreme Allied Commander, on the one hand, gave no orders on D-Day. Eisenhower provided guidance and then his commanders and troops did their duty. Hitler, on the other, tried to make every decision. One historian noted that

this stranglehold on the German command structure was worth a king's ransom to the Allies.

There are many qualities of leadership, but the five discussed above capture the essence of a leader. Good leaders reflect such qualities in all situations, whether great or small. In the global war on terrorism, we must seize every opportunity to practice them. The challenge that we face is too demanding and the lives of those we lead are too precious to strive for anything less.

RICHARD B. MYERS
Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff