



The Army Profession of Arms

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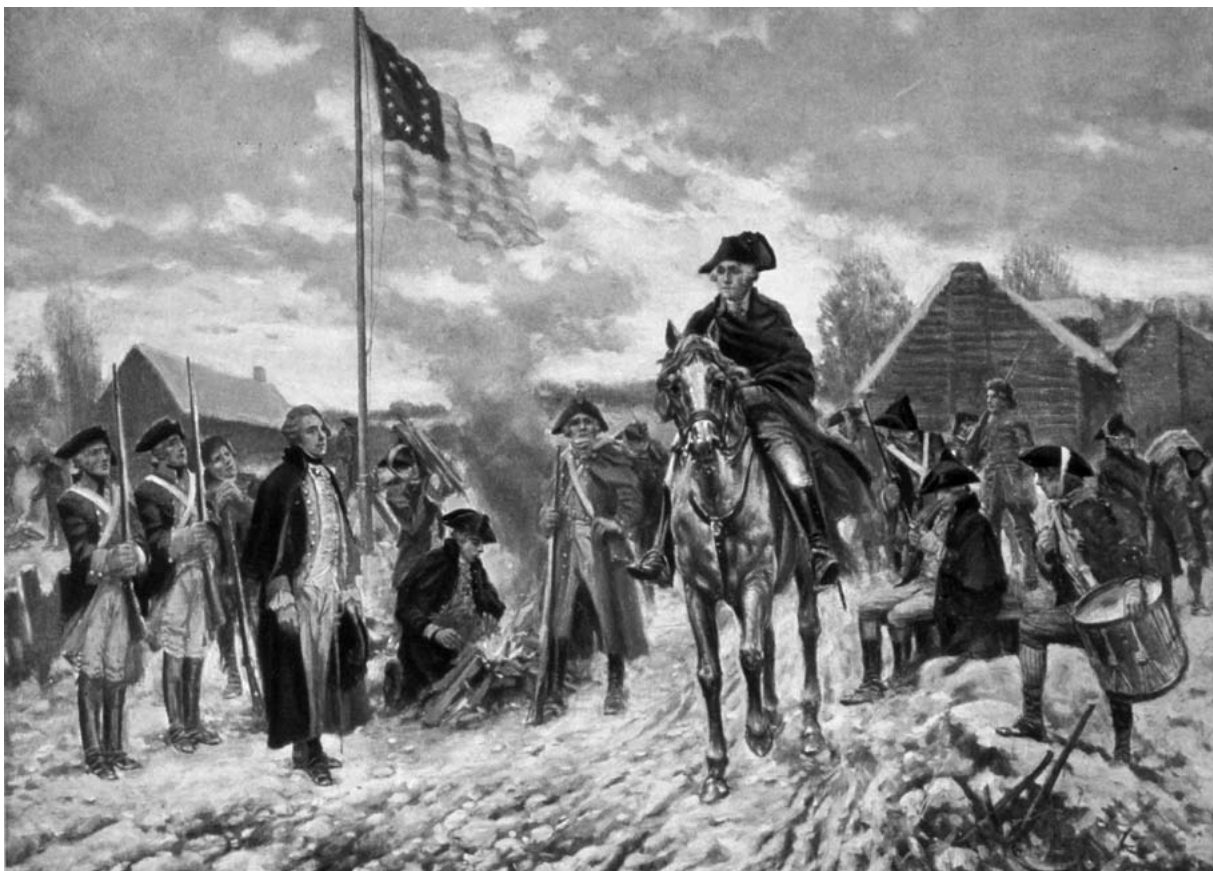
THE ARMY PROFESSION of Arms serves our Nation and accomplishes missions at least cost to the members of the Profession, those volunteers entrusted to the profession by our Nation. The Army is made up of skilled and reliable practitioners, soldiers, noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, civilians, and commissioned officers, all collaborating in the application of the art and science of operations on land to get those missions accomplished in ways consistent with who we are as a people and faithful to our Constitution.

The history of our Army profession is intertwined with the history of our Nation, despite what some scholars and historians peg as the latter part of the 19th century as the beginnings of professionalism in the U.S. Army. I would insist there is abundant evidence that right from our Nation's very beginnings fighting for our independence, there were beginnings of professionalism. General Washington's continuing insistence on more professionalism led to longer enlistments for the Continental Army. At Valley Forge, Baron von Steuben undertook to create a more professional Army, training soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers on the discipline and competencies required for land warfare in those Revolutionary War set of conditions. General George Washington as well as his chief of artillery, Henry Knox, recognized the need for a school or schools to educate soldiers in the Profession of Arms to serve the Nation. Indeed, Washington's continuing emphasis on professional study of the art of war again as president, in his eighth address to Congress on 7 December 1796, led to the eventual opening of the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1802 under the Jefferson administration:

The Institution of a Military Academy, is also recommended by cogent reasons. . . . Whatever argument may be drawn from particular examples, superficially viewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince, that the Art of War, is at once comprehensive and complicated; that it demands much previous study; and that the possession of it, in its most improved and perfect state, is always of great moment to the

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PHOTO: Marines riding atop an M-48 tank, covering their ears, Vietnam, 3 April 1968. (National Archives, 530617)



Washington at Valley Forge, Edward P. Moran, c. 1911.

security of a Nation. This, therefore, ought to be a serious care of every Government: and for this purpose, an Academy, where a regular course of Instruction is given, is an obvious expedient, which different Nations have successfully employed.

The establishment of the first Army school, the Artillery School of Practice, in 1824 at Fort Monroe, Virginia, demonstrates that early on the U.S. Army and our Profession of Arms has recognized the need for expert knowledge in the art and science of war to serve our Nation. Others followed. That expert knowledge requirement, competence, was coupled with General Washington's earlier insistence, indeed demand, that character and leadership methods be consistent with who we wanted to be as a people and a Nation. Today, in this tenth year of war, our Army Profession's continuing devotion to development of expert knowledge for the missions of the Nation and service executed with the character and leadership methods reflecting the values of our Constitution

remains faithful to the practices of those beginning times.

I am inspired every day by this "next greatest generation," by what those of you in the profession serving today are doing for our Nation in this now tenth year of war. You have done so with great courage, skill, results in Iraq and increasingly now in Afghanistan, and yes, at painful sacrifice to you and your families in conditions as tough as any the Nation has ever sent its Army into.

When things got really tough in the mission in Iraq, soldiers and their battle commanders stayed with it, true to your ethos, "I will never quit." You went back, and then went back again and again. You sacrificed. You did not quit even when others did. You taught yourselves how to fight an insurgency on the ground while writing new doctrine at home, and while simultaneously growing an Iraqi security force, promoting local and national governance and promoting the public good locally and nationally in the economy and in public works. When fighting was

called for, you did that. When nation creating and building was called for, you did that too. Most of the time, you were doing both, alternatively and simultaneously. And, you are still at it, in Iraq in New Dawn, and now in Afghanistan in a transformed regional campaign.

Tough missions. No quit. Resilient. Battle commanders and soldiers of character. An Army profession of character. I have never seen the U.S. Army so focused, so hard, so tough, and so resilient as you are now, yet going on and continuing to serve and achieve remarkable results for our Nation.

The Army Today

In 2007, General Casey established an Army Center for the Professional Military Ethic, first in Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic (SCPME) at West Point, then as a separate center devoted to all members of the Army Profession of Arms. This past year the Center was renamed “CAPE,” or Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, and placed in TRADOC under the direction of Colonel Sean Hannah, and assigned Army-wide proponentcy for the Army profession, our ethic, and character development, but remaining at West Point.

Many other things happened in the past 30 years to shape the collective view of the Army’s Profession of Arms. Several studies were done in the late 1960s and 1970s that shaped how the profession would train and educate itself. Noncommissioned officers, using their own initiative at Fort Benning, Georgia, compiled a creed in 1974 soon after the Sergeants Major Academy was founded and what became the Noncommissioned Officers Education System was started. There were the four “C’s” written about and lived: courage, competence, candor, and commitment. Officer education was strengthened and transformed by the beginnings of the School of Advanced Military Studies in 1982. The Combined Arms Services Staff School (CAS3) for captains was begun in 1982. CAS3 was closed in 2004 when the demand for company grade officers in the current wars became overwhelming. The School of Advanced Leadership and Tactics (SALT) has since been created to fill this void.

As part of the recovery from the war in Vietnam, the Army profession devoted itself with all its strength to being trained and ready. “Combat

Training Centers” were established at Fort Irwin, California, and at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, which then moved to Fort Polk, Louisiana, and another was established in Germany at Hohenfels. The Battle Command Training Program was begun in 1997. A whole generation of professionals was developed with a fierce devotion to a professional ethos of being trained and ready, to be ready to fight and win the first battle of the next war.

The Army began extending education to families because of the unique demand on families of the Army Profession of Arms. First there were command team seminars, then with organizations formed out of operational necessity in 1989 and 1990 because of Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm and recorded in Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-100-4; and now so well matured, structured, and resourced because of the demands of this current war.

Beginning in the 1980s, successive editions of Army Field Manual (FM) 1 as well as capstone doctrine FM 100-5 then 3.0 also strengthened discussions about the profession. The Army published lectures by British Field Marshal Sir John Hackett in a pamphlet called *The Profession of Arms*. Army values were reshaped in 1997 to the seven practiced today and given renewed meaning by actions in combat by this generation on today’s battlefields.

The Soldiers Creed and the Warrior Ethos were codified and published in 2003 and lived so magnificently by this current generation of professionals. Army studies begun in the early 2000s called for continuing education in the professional military ethic. A recent “civilian creed” was established. In 2006, the *Armed Forces Officer* was rewritten by a Joint team led by Colonel (Retired) Rick Swain, then professor of officership in the SCPME at West Point. This was the first rewrite since 1988. It was sponsored by the Joint Staff, J-7, based on the original 1950 edition by General S.L.A. Marshall with current descriptions of each of the subordinate professions of all our armed forces.

Thinking About the Profession of Arms

The year 2011 marks the 236th anniversary of the beginnings of the U.S. Army. June 14 is a day that usually passes without much public notice. Such is the nature of service and duty. Largely

unknown and largely away from public view, the Army profession, except in unusual circumstances or moments of national survival, has executed its duties faithfully and sometimes at great sacrifice to members of the profession and families as now with repeated deployments in this war. That selfless service, that largely unheralded performance of duty, that pride that comes from knowing you did your duty to the best of your abilities and did it honorably, has largely defined the professional ethic of the Army in peace and war. Such behavior has been etched in our consciousness by the deeds and actions of those who have gone before us in both the glare of the spotlight and the shadows of anonymity, and by those who serve now and inspire us daily with their courage, skill, and tenacious no-quit, mission-focused performance.

From 2001 to 2009, I was privileged to serve, at the appointment of the president, on the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) and as

chairman from 2005 to 2009. The mission of ABMC is to care for the cemeteries containing the honored dead of our overseas wars and to tell their inspiring story in visitor centers and map displays. These 23 cemeteries are all on foreign soil. Americans came to liberate those lands. Then, as is the character of our service, we left or in time turned control over to the governments now free. Americans wanted no land, to control no government, only enough land in which to bury our dead who had come to liberate their people. Selfless service by the members of the Army Profession of Arms with our other sister services.

From the early Continental Army's repeated defeats, from the retreat to the western shores of the Delaware River in 1776, to the inspiring no-quit and successful attack on Trenton at Christmas, to the cruel days of the winter at Valley Forge, to the selfless service of those who served to preserve the Nation from 1861 to 1865, to those who got off the



(U.S. Air Force, A 1C Jamie Nicley)

U.S. Army soldiers with the 173rd Cavalry Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron, Fort Bragg, NC, set up a perimeter during a Mobility Air Forces Exercise at the Nevada Test and Training Range in the desert of southern Nevada, 18 November 2009.

Higgins boats in the face of intense enemy direct and indirect fire when the ramp went down off the Normandy, France, coast on 6 June 1944, or to those in other intense combat and amphibious assaults in the Pacific from Guadalcanal in 1942 to Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945, to those who recovered from initial defeats to soldier on successfully under tough conditions in Korea from 1950 to 1953, to my own generation who answered our Nations call with courage, skill, and great personal sacrifice in Vietnam, to recent conflicts in Panama, Iraq, Somalia, and the Balkans, to those who do their duty to the highest standards of honor and courage in the difficult environment of Afghanistan and in securing the victory in Iraq today. As the Army song goes, “It wasn’t always easy and it wasn’t always fair, but when freedom called we answered, we were there.” Core attributes of selfless service and sacrifice for country, honorable duty expertly performed with missions accomplished—those are the core attributes of the Army Profession

What Makes the Profession Unique?

I would also urge that there are some unique aspects of the Army Profession of Arms that makes it different from any other professions.

First, like others, it is a profession that has a set of values and an ethos of expected behaviors. Yet it is in the necessity of those values that makes our profession different, from say, medicine or law. There is what Army FM 1 describes as the *unlimited liability*: “they assume in their oaths of office. While members of some professions engage in dangerous tasks daily, only members of the Armed Forces can be ordered to place their lives in peril anywhere at any time.” Moreover, British officer Sir John Hackett, in his lectures in that Army pamphlet *Profession of Arms*, reminds us that in other occupations, our values are admirable qualities. But, in the Army profession, they are absolutely necessary for accomplishment of our missions. In other words, they are not optional behaviors for individuals or units. They have a utility and have become over the past 10 years professional norms because of actions in combat that have defined them. The indispensable nature of those seven Army Values as well as the Soldiers Creed and Warrior Ethos have been galvanized into the profession’s behavior and by the

daily examples of them in action on the battlefield, toward mission accomplishment in this war.

Second, it is also a volunteer profession that depends on and has enormous good will and generosity among the American people. Such a volunteer profession openly, and with candor, communicates to the American people and is open to visits and comments from those outside the profession. While other professions are also voluntary, the profession of Arms also prides itself on its transparency, uniquely so as to sustain the trust of the public it serves. It takes time and extends itself to continue to connect with and explain the profession to include operations and preparations to a population and body politic largely without any military service. The Army profession must reflect on the character of its relationship with the American people, faithfulness to the Constitution and our values as a Nation, now and as the profession moves into the future continuing to serve in this era of protracted conflict and enormous resource pressures. The profession must consider in that context, frankly, how to respectfully inform and remind others of the unique demands of the profession when discussing pay, retirement, and medical care.

Third, unlike most other professions, ours asks much of our family members. It is a profession where military families see their professionals off to do their duty never knowing with any certainty about their safe return home. It is a profession where duty in war, most often changes their loved ones, sometimes physically through visible wounds, and sometimes in invisible wounds hard to detect that manifest themselves in hard to understand behaviors because of post-traumatic stress (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI) or both. Families of active duty members often reside overseas in posts, camps, and stations, distant from extended family support. Reserve Components families, on the other hand, live all over America but often lack the community of others with similar experiences and separations.

Military families continue to see the duty demands of selfless service to Nation in placing that duty over family and indeed life itself. Families share grief and band together in ways unique to the Army profession. Families share with each other the idea of service to something larger than self or family or wealth creation and form an unbreakable and unique bond my

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own wife, Denise, calls “forever friends.” Military families inspire all of America in their forbearance and courage and remarkable ingenuity and creative ways they also serve, and bear the constant pain of loss of their loved ones.

The Army profession is unique because it has professions within the profession, such as law, medicine, and clergy, and because it draws its members from other professions from our society as the following two points illustrate.

Fourth, The Army profession is now a profession including Army Reserve and Army National Guard operating now as an operational reserve where active and Reserve Component soldiers serve shoulder to shoulder in this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous fight. This employment, because of operational necessity, of over 80,000 members of the Reserve and National Guard annually as part of Army Force Generation, is a seismic shift from the previous strategic reserve employment of the USAR and ARNG from World War II until 2001. While the profession has made great strides in seamlessly operating in combat theaters of war, urgent action is in order to realize fully the integration of forces at home in the United States, especially those members of the profession in the Reserve Component who are released from active duty but have continuing medical issues connected to their active duty service.

Fifth, it is a profession that right from the beginning and out of mission necessity created its own medical profession nested within the Army profession, often leading the way for the nation in discovery of new cures and rehabilitation techniques. From inoculations against small pox begun by General Washington in the Revolutionary War, to extensive attention to rehabilitation beginning in the Civil War until today for limb loss, to malaria and yellow fever cures, to wide scale use of antibiotics, to pioneering research and treatment, to leading the way in our Nation of research and

treatment for PTSD and TBI, the Army medical profession within the Army Profession of Arms has performed magnificently.

For any of us on the battlefield, the difference between life and death is the skill of a junior enlisted combat medic or fellow soldier skilled in combat life saving, backed by rapid evacuation to skilled military medical practitioners in evacuation hospitals in theater, to continuing intensive care by Air Force Critical Care Air Transport Teams on flights, to life saving trauma care at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, then to the United States, and to continued healing and rehabilitation within the professional family at major treatment facilities.

This current war has seen miraculous life saving methods employed from battlefield to rehabilitation. You save lives, heal your own, help those grievously wounded heal, recover, and rehab all within the professional family. You allow many to continue on active duty to continue to serve, to continue in the Army professional family, as you did me after my leg was amputated below the knee. You do all this because such medical expertise is there to do that, but just as importantly, you do all that keeping the professional within the professional family. This keeping our soldiers within the professional family is both right and a life saving professional decision, a decision that studies and clinical observations have proven not only aids physical healing from visible and invisible wounds, but also in gaining emotional balance to go on and continue to serve or go on to other paths in life. That is a professional choice and the right one for members of the profession who have voluntarily served and who have become wounded, ill, or injured serving something larger than themselves. The profession needs to continue to care for its own.

Other professionals with the Army profession, legal and clergy, continue their own remarkably inspiring service in this current war. Both came into being in our early Army out of necessity and choice, and both bring unique professional skills necessarily different from their civilian counterpart professions because of the unique duties of the Army profession as noted above, and because of the unique set of laws Congress has applied to our armed forces.

Sixth, it is a profession that asks more of new members right away, new soldiers, new noncommissioned officers, and new officers than other professions. The Army is deliberately structured to ask these newest members of the profession to shoulder the toughest set of duties to get missions accomplished. Because of those expected duties as well as sacrifice right away, I believe all uniformed members become professionals as soon as they take the oath to protect and defend the Constitution as they are expected to do their duties accordingly. The profession needs to continue its proactive adjustments for training and education in individual and units, in all arms, and in counterinsurgency (COIN), to include interagency competencies as well as looking at hybrid threats at national training centers to increase competencies across the spectrum of conflict. What does it mean for education right away after joining the profession in the expected character of service, for value internalization, and for how to ensure character in action?

The Profession of Arms has many outlines of expected individual and unit behavior from oath sworn, to various creeds, to the Warrior Ethos and Army Values. They have been defined magnificently in action by this generation with examples of such action daily in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In COIN and the profession's newest concept of "mission command," it would appear that such trends of expectations of initiative, creativity, and small unit mission focused actions from the newest and youngest members of the profession within broad guidelines will continue to be the norm.

Already in recognition of this expectation vested on the Army's newest soldiers, Initial Military Training has been recently transformed rapidly. Officer initial education to include precommissioning rigor has also undergone changes in recognition of the profession's expectations of new officer leaders. Noncommissioned officer leader courses have also changed in recognition of this reality. What else is necessary to sustain and improve on this professional load shouldered by the newest members of the profession? How to continue to encourage initiative especially in combat conditions like today that demand that at small unit level for mission accomplishment? I always like what British Field Marshal Wavell said:

The pious Greek, when he had set up altars to all the great gods by name, added one more



(U.S. Army, SSG Alfred Johnson)

U.S. and Iraqi soldiers run to get aboard a CH-47 Chinook to be transported back to Forward Operation Base Brassfield-Mora after completing their mission during Operation Katrina, 27 February 2006.

altar, "To the Unknown God." So whenever we speak and think of the great captains and set up our military altars to Hannibal and Napoleon and Marlborough and such-like, let us add one more altar, "To the Unknown Leader," that is, to the good company, platoon, or section leader who carries forward his men or holds his post and often falls unknown. It is these who in the end do most to win wars. The British have been a free people and are still a comparatively free people; and though we are not, thank Heaven, a military nation, this tradition of freedom gives to our junior leaders in war a priceless gift of initiative. So long as this initiative is not cramped by too many regulations, by too much formalism, we shall, I trust, continue to win our battles—sometimes in spite of our higher commanders.

How does the profession continue to allow that initiative and not smother it by directives while simultaneously recreating what the recent study on suicide prevention has called, "the lost art of garrison leadership" within a profession where up to half the members have known only war?

Seven, it is a profession that allows wide discretion in the judgment of officers who are commanding soldiers and units in operations during war. That is a huge strength, but it comes with huge responsibilities for the profession. No parent or family member checks certification of a commander in the Army profession before they entrust their sons and daughters or wives or husbands to the command of an American officer. The American people trust the profession will get it right and that the commander is both qualified and competent and a leader of character. The existence of such trust is a huge strength because it allows creative and imaginative activities to go on in pursuit of tough missions as is going on now.

Discretion is required for the profession to fulfill its duties to the Nation, the Constitution, and the American people, especially now in this complex set of counterinsurgency conditions. But, being trusted with such discretion also comes with enormous responsibilities. The responsibility lies on each to see that we are all worthy of such trust in our character, have the full range of competencies required of our operational environment, and the leadership practices consistent with who we are as a Nation. The profession should be mindful of the old saying that “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” The profession, now as always as was true when I served actively, but especially now, given 10 years of war, must be ever vigilant as it continues to be to toxic command climates and abuses of power and intervene when required to maintain expected professional standards. The Army profession must reinforce the necessity for, tolerate, and indeed encourage mutual candor, even as it allows wide discretion in command. It seems to me the American people trust the profession to do just that. How you do it is of course the profession’s business. But, it seems to me it must be done or the profession hazards losing the trust of the American people, and the trust of junior noncommissioned officers and officer leaders and soldiers.

Eighth, it is a profession that gets to decide absolutes. I might also suggest care in declaring those absolutes about the profession although there are many. There are four stated in the Warrior Ethos, lived so well in combat over 10 years they are now embedded in the profession. They are now norms. The profession gets its norms by demonstrated behavior. The Army profession is a concrete, pragmatic one

because of the deadly arena it operates in. It is not a philosophy, or a science, not even a social science, however much the insights of philosophy and the various sciences might inform the profession. Every generation gets to make those choices about professional norms. Sometimes what are absolutes for one generation turn out not to be so for the next. While expected professional behaviors in selfless service to our Nation seem to endure across generations, other areas like doctrine, equipment and weapons requirements, and even training methods do not. For example, my generation had some doctrinal absolutes no longer applicable now, had some weapon systems requirement absolutes no longer valid now, had some combat training center absolutes in opposition forces structuring no longer valid now.

Ninth, it is a profession that has a duty to advise our elected and appointed civilian leadership on the use and commitment of our Armed Forces in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous situations tactically and strategically with candor and deference consistent with our Constitution in this era of persistent conflict and amidst changing fiscal and political conditions.

Finally, the Army profession gets to distinguish enduring realities from situation specifics about the nature of war and how that affects the profession. During General Washington’s crossing of the Delaware River and the Continental Army’s successful attack on Trenton, then two weeks later another successful attack on British forces at Princeton, there were in evidence enduring truths of battle command: character, competence, and leadership. They are as true today as they were then.

There were also characteristics peculiar to that time and place, especially in tactics, weapons, various arms, and services required. Such a phenomenon exists today in this war. The Army profession must sort those out for the profession in the future just as my generation was required to do. Each generation gets

The Army profession must reinforce the necessity for... candor, even as it allows wide discretion in command.

to make those choices for the next generation—easy to do when we look back at Washington’s time or even now the Cold War—but not so easy when making such choices in the moment of ambiguity of contemporary times and enormous resource pressures. Those choices are difficult to make, but the choices must be made, and professionals should make them.

Concluding Observations

Finally, I have two personal observations.

The first is that I was permitted to remain on active duty and continue to serve with soldiers after having my left leg amputated below the knee from wounds in action in Cambodia was my life’s great privilege. The profession for me personally always resembled a calling and a privilege.

I said in my Kermit Roosevelt speeches in the United Kingdom, in 1992 (long ago now), that I believe soldiering is a matter of the mind and heart. There is much passion, love for our soldiers, and emotion in what professional soldiers do. It is a hard and demanding profession, never so evident as in the past 10 years. Professionals have to feel it all, I believe, to know what to do to accomplish our missions while also putting our soldiers at the best possible advantage and keeping them that way in any kind of operation, anywhere on the spectrum of conflict, to accomplish the mission at least cost to them. That takes character, competence, and leadership and continuous development in a profession that demands and encourages that continuing growth.

In September 2010, I was talking at West Point with Professor Elizabeth Samet who wrote *Soldier’s Heart*. She asked me what is the one enduring truth about being a professional. I had to pause a few minutes to think that one over. I told her *trust*. I wrote in a letter to my wife, Denise, in 1991, “soldiers are great and are my best friends. One said to me the other day ‘We trust you.’ . . . Must do what is right and confident I can do that.”

Twenty years ago a noncommissioned officer in the 3rd Armored Division in 1991 just before our attack into Iraq stopped me talking about our maneuver plan and said, “don’t worry, general we trust you.” That noncommissioned officer captured, as noncommissioned officers frequently do, the embodiment of what we are doing as professionals, and in adapting our profession over time to the requirements of selfless service to our republic to

gain the mission at least cost in the deadly arena of land warfare—gain and maintain the trust of the American people, our civilian superiors, our fellow soldiers and those men and women entrusted to us. *Trust*, I believe means to lead and also to serve, and in so doing, carrying out our duties as professionals; in that way we earn that trust. We serve as my grandson’s class of 2012 at West Point has chosen as their motto, “for more than ourselves.”

My second observation comes from what I said to cadets at West Point in January 2000. At the close of my remarks, I offered this:

Sometime after graduation and I cannot predict when, the Nation will look to you to accomplish a mission of extreme difficulty and importance, and one that only you and your soldiers can do. I do not know the conditions, nor part of the world, nor even how long after graduation, but I know you will be on the spot to deliver mission accomplished at least cost to the soldiers the Nation has entrusted to your command. You must be ready for that and have your soldiers ready whether you are a new lieutenant or Chief of Staff of the Army... You will remember. On that day when our Nation needs you to accomplish that difficult and important mission, you will do your duty, honor yourself and your soldiers, and our country. I know you will.

That was the West Point Class of 2003. From that class until the present, 34 of those former cadets have given their lives doing just that along with over 6,000 of their fellow members of our armed forces. It is a stunning and reflective thought.

All those who have given their lives in this current war serve as a constant reminder to us all and especially to their families who bear the pain of that loss, just how unique our Army Profession of Arms is in the character of its service to our Nation. It is unlike any other profession. That uniqueness certainly propels the Army profession, indeed demands that it continue to examine itself honestly and with candor and renew its commitment to that selfless service and its faithfulness to the Constitution and the American people who entrust their sons and daughters to it just as you are doing. Continuing assessment and refinement of the profession is indeed a noble and necessary duty. **MR**