



Commander's Thoughts

July 2012

The Road Ahead

While commanding 101st Airborne Division in Iraq in 2003, GEN(R) David Petraeus said to a reporter, "Tell me how this ends." Those five words would go on to be one of his most famous quotes, and was reflective of GEN Petraeus' understanding that the entire team plays a critical role in any plan and vision toward a desired end state. This quote was later used to shape Tell Me How This Ends, by Linda Robinson, and as I reflect on this classic book, two things resonated with me. First, the detailed accounts of experiences that our young Service Members have gone through--- experiences that only combat veterans know and may not share outside of their battlefield brotherhood --- invigorated my commitment to ensuring our Warriors and their Families get nothing but the absolute best care. Second, GEN Petraeus' ability to communicate at all levels, with individuals of varying ranks, experience, and duty descriptions was phenomenal and models how I want to communicate as a senior leader. I highly recommend the book as part of your library for personal and professional growth as many of our leaders serving today are young leaders that played vital roles in the success of both OIF and OEF.

Speaking of communication, I understand that in some cases, my communication to the field has not kept pace with the changes, events, and initiatives that are shaping the future of Army Medicine and will change that to ensure everyone is part of the journey ahead. I directed changes to our battle rhythm that affords the opportunity for all subordinate commanders to participate in frequent leader video teleconferences. This will enable everyone to hear the dialogue occurring at the strategic and operational level and will also afford an opportunity for tactical conversations to occur. In addition to this directive, I will increase my communication through the various media forums. The pace of change is fast and the need to ensure all have the same situational awareness is critical. I will also rely on each of you to share the messages.

At my Commander's Conference this month, senior AMEDD leaders will set the strategy for our enterprise to provide not only a campaign plan for the next four years but also a blueprint for the next fifteen years. This is imperative for the sustainability of Army Medicine. The plan and blueprint will allow us to create the capacity required to enable individual, unit, and organizational health, as well as continuing our healthcare mission; to enhance diplomacy by building new partnerships and strengthening old ones to promote unity of effort at all levels; and improve individual stamina, to guarantee unit and organizational stamina - a must for readiness and the Army's ability to Prevent, Shape, and Win wars.

Change and challenge are two words that inspire fear in some and excitement in others. We have made significant modifications and adaptations over the last 15 years in how we deliver care in austere environments, train our medics, document our encounters, track patients throughout the care continuum, and shape our Army Medicine leaders. We have demonstrated an impressive capacity to carry out our mission while also walking the horizon and adjusting fire as we must do now. During my recent visit to

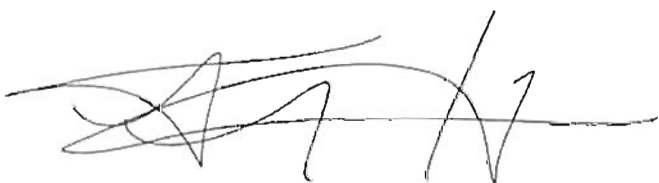
the Pacific Region, I was impressed with the expansive and collaborative ways in which the Army Medicine team in the Asia-Pacific continually re-azimuths in order to ensure an expansive footprint in the delivery of care, train for missions and deployments, conduct research, and embrace the emerging collaborative opportunities with other military services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and civilian partners in that region. With the national spotlight on the Asia-Pacific AOR, the Army Medicine team is proactively managing the changes occurring in that region - I am proud of them.

I know there are concerns and questions some of you have about changes going on within the military and Army Medicine, why they are happening, and how they will affect you. It is important to understand the challenges being faced while not losing sight of the desired endpoint. It is easy to get distracted by obstacles that are ten feet in front of us and forget the bigger picture of what we want our organization to look like one, five, or fifteen years from now. I am very proud of what Army Medicine has accomplished, but we have not reached our endpoint. The shifts taking place in medicine across our Nation have only just begun to take form, and I want every member of the Army Medicine team to ask themselves this: if you knew you could not fail, what would you want to change within Army Medicine and what would that end-state look like?

The Commander's Conference this month marks a defining moment for Army Medicine. It represents a first opportunity for teaming at the senior leader level and a venue in which to have the face-to-face fierce conversations that are needed to forge an Army Medicine of the future. As the philosopher Goethe states, "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now."

I want to hear from you. Your voice can best be heard by dialoguing with me on Twitter @LTGHoroho.

Serving to heal...Honored to serve!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia D. Horoho', written in a cursive style.

LTG Patricia D. Horoho