

Four-Star Leadership for Leaders

Volume II

**When I went to Vietnam for my last combat
tour – I didn't expect to come home.**

*A Conversation with
General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA*

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"When I went to Vietnam for my last combat tour -- I didn't expect to come home."

A conversation with General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA

A graduate of West Point, class of 1964, General McCaffrey was born on November 17, 1942, in Taunton, MA. Following commissioning in the infantry he served in the Dominican Republic intervention with the 82nd Airborne Division in 1965, followed by two deployments to Vietnam, where he was awarded two Distinguished Service Crosses – second only to the Medal of Honor – two Silver Stars and three Purple Hearts. He served his fourth combat tour during Desert Storm as Commander of 24th Infantry Division (Mech) during the historic 400 kilometer “left hook” attack into Iraq. He earned an MA in Government from the American University. From 1992-1994 McCaffrey was a special assistant to General Colin Powell, Chairman of the JCS, followed by assignment as Commander-in-Chief of US Southern Command dealing with all of Latin America from 1994-1996. President Clinton appointed him drug czar in 1996, a position he held until 2001, when he became Bradley Professor of National Security at West Point for the next five years. General McCaffrey is now head of his own consulting firm in Arlington, VA – and a national security commentator for NBC News.

General, looking back on the history of America's four-star generals, starting with U.S. Grant, there have been a number of outstanding leaders but not many truly superb leaders who stand out from all the others. What separates these unbelievably good leaders from the rest?

Well, my dad and I were both amateur military historians so we fought about that issue for 30 years. Dad retired as a Lt. General after nine years of combat service in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. West Point class of 1939. A very wise man. For example, take General Douglas MacArthur. That’s our favorite debate. I think MacArthur was at the top of the heap in the history of the

American armed forces - a strategic genius, a person of vision. Dad was the Deputy Corps G-3 at the invasion at Inchon in 1950 and says if they tried it a thousand more times it would have failed 999 times. So we remained far apart on the issue. All Dad could see was the enormous faults of MacArthur - his massive ego, his inability to doubt his own judgment.

However, looking at our four star military leaders as a collective group, I would argue that they were serious people of enormous integrity. By and large, the four star leaders are admired by the Armed Forces as role models to be emulated. They're tremendous examples. If you know about Eisenhower, Marshall, Abrams, Colin Powell, Norm Schwarzkopf, ADM Mike Mullen, and Dave Petraeus, you want to be like them.

However, I think the biggest problem is that some of our senior leaders are excellent organizers and managers – but they are sadly inadequate in understanding sophisticated operational war fighting skills. They simply haven't had enough war-fighting education and practice. Their own proclivities, their own purpose hasn't been to think about, to dwell upon war fighting. Some of them haven't been very good at it. If you look at the Israelis or the Germans or the Vietnamese, their senior Generals would make miserable political-military representatives in an international security conference. However, their senior military leaders were brutal when it came to breaking an enemy force in the field through cunning and stealth and violence and mass – and applying the principles of war. MacArthur stands out as somebody who understood war. We have others -- but even the ones who did master warfare

perhaps weren't as acceptable in their personal lives or values. George Patton had so many personal flaws it's mind boggling -- but he also understood how to crack the German army -- the most effective ground fighting force of WWII.

In summary, America would be hard pressed to point to business or political leadership or academic leadership or church leadership and say here are people of better character than our most senior military leaders. My focus would be that we need our senior military leaders more focused on war fighting, than becoming masters of the Washington budget process.

A large number of the senior leadership in World War II didn't have much combat experience themselves when the war began. They may have had something inherent in them that gave them the ability to lead men in battle when the time to do so was thrust upon them, but most had to learn by doing. Do you agree?

This also sounds like the debate my dad and I had for years. World War II is sort of my hobby, my avocation. I would argue that for a thousand years we'll never see again any performance which exceeds the U.S. Armed Forces 1939-1945. The nation put together a twelve and a half million man military force, deployed it around the globe, and defeated three evil empires. They accomplished this task in four years with hundreds of thousands killed, wounded, and missing. I mean, 500 years from now if you fly into Surinam or Burma -- or the Horn of Africa, you're probably landing on some U.S. Army Air Corps or Navy fighter airstrip. The national airport and the best road that

leads from the capitol to the airport were probably constructed by a bunch of military engineers who had been civilians a year earlier.

General Mark Clark, our senior WWII commander in Italy, however, is an example of a great officer who lacked strategic vision. He was a brilliant and forceful man. However, he obtusely fought from the southern tip of Italy all the way to the northern borders with a complete lack of strategic and operational innovation. He made only two half-hearted, ineffectual left hooks in a war fighting environment where we had absolute control of the air and sea. How could he have narrowly carried out such a blood-soaked campaign when we had such overpowering force and clear options? We attacked in the Italian theater every morning at dawn -- up the ridgelines against a German army that was fighting for its survival. Our tactical leadership was incredibly courageous and adept at the company and battalion level. They were willing to get up and senselessly cross a river at three o'clock in the morning with total lack of surprise or maneuver -- and get killed doing it.

We cannot train senior officers to be war fighters just by learning through practical experience in the opening rounds of each war. You have to educate and train officers progressively at each grade by reading history, and endless war games, map exercises, terrain walks, simulations, and the study of geography and weather. You have to bring them along by intensive intellectual activity about the next generation of war fighting threats. That's what we have to focus on. I certainly hope that's where we go. We need more Petraeus' and Macarthur's.

Is that now being done?

More so than any time in our history, thank God. We finally developed sophisticated battle simulations. We've put together the Battle Command Training Program - what a gift, because I don't think any of our division battle staffs knew what they were doing in past wars until they were trained in combat. They certainly had never had an opportunity to exercise large scale operations except for peacetime exercises such as *Reforger* in Germany and the Korean theater *Team Spirit*. All those huge exercises are gone now so the division commander and his G-4 can't learn how you maneuver with 4,000 vehicles in the field. You have to learn stuff for the next war by simulations. So thank God we've gone that route.

There are some other war games that are phenomenal. We ran the rehearsal for *Desert Storm* on a simulation map exercise at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. There were three or four thousand battle leaders from throughout CENTCOM taking part under the tutelage of our genius commander General Norm Schwarzkopf. During this pre-war exercise at Ft. Bragg, we did a computer aided map exercise to rehearse the defense of Saudi Arabia against an Iraqi attack.

When my 24th ID commanders and I got home to Ft. Stewart, I got on Post Closed Circuit TV and said we needed to get ready to fight in Iraq in 90 days. Sixty days later we deployed. When I got to Saudi Arabia I'd already done a hot wash with General Schwarzkopf and my XVIII Airborne Corps

Commander, LTG Gary Luck, on the vulnerabilities and challenges of fighting to defend Saudi Arabia. The maps from the Ft. Bragg exercise were still up in my Division Command five-ton expando van for the first week or so of our actual combat deployment to Desert Shield in Saudi Arabia.

Of interest I might add, is that there were very few of our senior US commanders in Saudi Arabia when I arrived. It was like nobody was in charge. The four-stars were back in Florida and Georgia and the Pentagon. They were managing the deployment from the stateside launch air bases and ports. I took my 24th Infantry Division (Mech) on my own initiative and went 200 kilometers out into the desert. I learned during the Ft. Bragg mapex that I needed to be able to trade space for time and maneuver. I needed to be able to threaten an Iraqi flank if they attacked. I had learned in the Ft. Bragg exercise that the way to fight the Iraqis was to go west into the desert and then attack and pin them against the Persian Gulf as they attacked south.

I remember an interview with a battalion commander - I don't remember his name - but somebody asked him why he was so successful in one of the maneuvers during the battle, and he said, "That's because we fought it four or five times before we fought it for real." And I thought that was an interesting lesson about preparation.

We worked constantly to think through every aspect of the pending attack to free Kuwait. We must have had hundreds and hundreds of hours of planning time prior to the four days of ground battle in *Desert Storm*. There

were multiple CENTCOM and XVIII Airborne Corps plans analyzed. By the way, my Corps Commander, LTG Gary Luck was a brilliant officer with a PhD in ops research. He was also a very experienced combat veteran of Vietnam. Soldiers loved him.

My 24th ID leadership down to battalion level had gone through the final operational plan for the entire coming battle on four separate multi day, computer supported, map and sand table exercises. It looked to be much harder of a battle on the sand tables than it turned out to be when we did it in real life. For example, during our pre-war mapex, the 24th ID leadership fought for three days to seize the Jalibah Airfield up on the Euphrates River. We had allocated two 24th ID brigades for the attack on Jalibah --because the initial brigade commander who had the mission for the mapex was overcome by the enormity of attacking an Iraqi airbase which was a desert fortress with 80 anti-aircraft guns on it, 2,000 troops, and two tank battalions. Jalibah Airfield looked to be a formidable enemy array. Much of it was all underground. The mapex brigade commander concluded that "I can't do it unless I have four infantry battalions to attack onto the airfield and dismount to fight underground." We finally said okay, it's a two-brigade attack to take Jalibah. We finally took Jalibah during the actual war with a three-battalion impromptu attack in one hour. We started at six o'clock in the morning, hit it with five battalions of US artillery, rolled in on it with Air Force fighter-bombers and Army Apache attack helicopters -- and then ran straight down the Jalibah airfield with one tank battalion. We crashed through the fences and went

roaring down the runway shooting people, aircraft, and tanks. The Iraqis were running around in panic and chaos.

We concluded that a lot of our actual battlefield success in Desert Storm was pre-attack preparation and rehearsals. We knew every square meter on that battlefield before we went north. A lot of our rehearsal and training techniques were learned as a product of General Don Starry, General Bill Richardson, and the TRADOC training revolution of the 1970's and 1980's. They gave us the training tools to work through this. I think our US military four-stars have been men of tremendous character, leadership and vision. However, for some senior leaders, their war fighting skills sometimes had not been the central part of their education or their life experience.

Just how important is the training – the experience – down at the battalion level?

For a generation -- Army battalions during the 70's and 80's were constantly rotating through or serving in Germany facing the Warsaw Pact forces. A battalion commander's reputation, his or her future in the Army, was actually going to be predicated on how effectively the battalion performed in the field in Germany facing a real enemy. A battalion commander got some grade for style -- but not a lot.

A battalion commander had to keep a bunch of that complex machinery operating in the field day and night. You had to make logistics and communications work. You had to cross real rivers at night, and do live-fire

maneuver exercises at Hohenfels, Grafenwoehr, and Wildflecken Major Training Areas. That is where you made your reputation with your peers and superiors.

The senior leaders would pretend that the battalion commander wasn't being bluntly graded -- that it was all just a training and evaluation program. I was a brand new major promotable who got accelerated to command a Mech Infantry battalion in Germany. I'll never forget this wonderful 3rd Infantry Division Commander talking to all of his field grade officers in the Officers Club -- 300 officers crammed in there. He said, "A lot of you battalion commanders think that your career is on the line in these exercises. There's nothing that can be farther from the truth. This is a training program. This is education. This is developing you as a person. However, it is ALSO going to be in your Officer Efficiency Rating [OER]." He got everyone laughing. "Look," he said, "you're going to find out some of you aren't very good at this business, and we gotta know that in peacetime."

Thinking back to the day that you graduated from West Point as a second lieutenant, what were the thoughts in your mind about how you were going to apply all the things that you had learned?

I've been reading military history my entire life. I grew up listening to World War II and Korean War vets talk about war since I was a boy. The part of West Point that I most enjoyed was the military training. I was a "third lieutenant" for the summer in a mech infantry battalion in Germany. I got to act as an infantry squad leader in summer training as a sophomore. Lots of

exposure as a very young man -- M-1 rifles, live-fire qualification, and other adventures! Then, after graduation thankfully I went to Ranger School. That gave me a Master's Degree equivalent in small unit combat skills before I reported to my first assignment as a parachute infantry platoon leader. Like most young infantry officers, my motto was "frequently wrong, but never in doubt." I believed that I was joining the best division on the face of the earth -- the famous 82nd Airborne. I went to that division because I thought it would deploy to combat in Vietnam. Instead we went the other way to the Dominican Republic intervention to stop a Cuban inspired civil war. I couldn't believe my good fortune. Here I was in combat. In the middle of something I'd been thinking about, reading about, hearing about my entire life. Four years at West Point and a year of Army training had given me all these tools. I knew exactly what I was doing. I was so proud to be part of it. I didn't see much beyond where I was. My dream was to be a company commander.

Did this set you apart from your peers?

We were all totally gung-ho in the 82nd Airborne Division prior to Vietnam. We lost a lot of our confidence in Vietnam. But I remember at Ft. Bragg, being tutored by our battalion commander (2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne) – LTC Hugh McDonald. What a superb battle leader. He had been a First Sergeant in the Korean War and was given a direct battlefield commission to captain. We were enormously in awe of him. Hugh McDonald also had already been in Vietnam as an advisor for the Vietnamese Airborne for two years. I remember he told us at a battalion officer's call that "a battalion is too

small a formation to fight alone in the Vietnam Theater.” I remember thinking in disbelief that I’m going to have to reevaluate my opinion of LTC McDonald. How could he possibly believe that 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry was too small a formation to operate anywhere in the world? I couldn’t believe that any enemy force could overcome an American airborne infantry battalion. That was our mindset -- the youth, the confidence, and an element of naiveté. I thought our 800 paratroopers were the most powerful formation on the face of the earth. I was soon to learn otherwise. I was to learn about confusion and despair -- and getting lost -- and soldiers being filthy and utterly exhausted -- and comms failing -- and what happens when you have piles of soldiers screaming because they’re maimed and dying. I didn’t know any of that when I was a lieutenant in 2nd Battalion 325th Airborne.

One of the basic premises of leadership is that you take care of your own troops.

Did you find that to be a particular challenge in Vietnam?

Well, let’s remember I started in the peacetime 82nd Airborne. I joined a peacetime army with incredible NCOs. The division was run by seasoned commissioned officers – many were WWII or Korean combat veterans. We young officers had incredible tutoring and examples to emulate. I admired and respected infantry sergeants. I still do. My first assignment in the 82nd Airborne Division was an unusual period. The senior NCOs were of course much older than we brand new 2nd lieutenants. The NCOs and officers lived the whole notion of taking care of soldiers. The officers and senior NCOs ate last, got in

the attack helicopters first, got up first, and got to bed last. If soldiers were working in freezing cold or fierce heat we were trained to be there with them.

I was on my third combat tour before I took command of an infantry company in the 1st Cavalry Division. I went to the Vietnamese Airborne the second tour and experienced a lot of fierce combat. Before I finally took command of an infantry company in combat, I had done a lot of fighting. I knew what I was doing.

Luckily as a company commander (B Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry) I served in the 1st Cavalry Division that was optimized for combat in Vietnam. We had incredible helicopter mobility and firepower. However, it comes as a shock for a lot of civilians when I tell them this. If you served in my company in Vietnam in 1968-1969 it was about a 100 percent guarantee you were not going to get through a year in combat without being killed or wounded. Fortunately mostly we faced non-life threatening wounds combined with superb medical evacuation and care. I told my soldiers -- if you work real hard at what you're doing. If you do what the 1st Sergeant and I tell you to do (both the first sergeant and I were on our third combat tour), then the chances are overwhelming you'll go home alive.

But it was hard work to stay alive in Vietnam in 1968-69. B Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cav, was in desperate combat frequently. We would get 15-20 people wounded. We did better than most other infantry companies. Some of it was luck and God's care. A lot of it was unending hard work and attention

to detail. We never got ambushed the whole time I was there. But infantry combat in Vietnam was a ferociously unpleasant and dangerous environment.

It's hard for me to imagine, General, someone like yourself who won two DSCs, which is an unbelievable accomplishment. If I were to talk to some of the troops that served with you, would they say that you were fearless?

They probably would -- but I wasn't. The first reunion of my Vietnam Company I attended in 1986 had nine former B Company 2-7th Cav soldiers who came to see me at Fort Benning, Georgia. All had received purple hearts. My personal rule is this: never take a risk you can mitigate. A risk is something you can reduce with hard work and caution. So we would work incredibly hard to minimize risk. However, when you're finally forced to take a risk -- then throw caution to the winds and attack with total violence and fury. I was constantly worried as a company commander in Vietnam. I ended up with a giant tic under my eye -- I remember a big twitch in my face. I started having nightmares at night and rambling, talking loud. My command group soldiers would have to cover my mouth and shake me awake. I felt tremendous pressure to not allow my soldiers to be killed. Vietnam was an incredibly hostile environment. Just staying alive or not getting injured was difficult. We encountered vicious close-quarters combat. We were getting mortared, rocket attacks, and firefights in bunker complexes. I would say that once we got into firefights, I was largely unaffected by fear during direct combat. But the anticipation and the responsibility of being a company commander weighed very heavily on me.

Did you have any concerns for your own mortality?

I never really thought I would live through my third combat tour. I hear all the time from people in my Vietnam age group who tell me they never thought they'd get killed. They just couldn't envision their own death. Personally I couldn't see how I was going to survive my third combat tour. My dear wife waiting in California felt the same way. I didn't see any way out of it. I figured there was a statistic there playing out. When I volunteered for Vietnam for my third combat tour -- I didn't expect to come home.

That's awfully fatalistic, isn't it?

Well, I just couldn't see any way out of it. To be honest, staying alive was not a dominant factor. The dominant factor was the degree to which I could keep my company soldiers alive and to effectively carry out our missions. I thought I had the right training and the personal strength to command in combat. So I wasn't depressed at all. It was an incredibly rewarding experience as a company commander. I loved these soldiers I was serving with. They had courage, energy, and were very good fighters. I also admired the other company commanders. I'm still in frequent contact with my soldiers from B Company 2-7th Cav today. But I couldn't see the likelihood of me surviving any more direct combat tours.

But you did. Do you consider yourself to be particularly religious?

Well, my dad is. I'm a good Catholic boy. That's one of the great attributes of being a primitive Catholic, as I like to describe myself. I had a St.

Christopher medal. I had my dad's World War II dog tags. I had several Orders of Nuns praying for me. I still have a tattered religious card in my wallet from 1969. The card is an 11th century prayer which promises that if you pray nine times before going into battle – “no fire shall consume you.” I still use it.

One of my soldiers once commented that I looked so serene on full helicopter combat assaults involving sixteen to eighteen helicopters for the entire company. A helicopter combat assault is exciting beyond belief. I just hyperventilate thinking about it. You've done all the planning. You know you'd get onto a hostile LZ and possibly be engaged in ferocious combat on arrival. When the assault helicopters turn short final -- the rocket firing attack helicopters are going overhead. There are these ferocious crack-bangs. Massive artillery fires are sealing off the LZ. Then the assault helicopter door gunners open up with their machine guns. One of my soldiers told me, “God, you look so peaceful as we go on these assaults.” I responded “Well it is pretty easy. During those closing minutes there is nothing more I can do to affect the situation. I've got about nine Catholic prayers that I'm saying over and over again in a loop. I'm completely at peace and unaffected by it.”

Are you a Vietnam vet?

No, sir, I served my time in the Army before the war and when I tried to get back on active duty as a helicopter pilot they didn't want me.

Well, you're lucky. Vietnam was a crappy war. 58,000 killed. 303,000 wounded. Our political leaders failed us. However, at company level we thought we never lost a fight.

Strange memories. I remember sitting there desperately clutching onto my seat in a helicopter spiraling down to an LZ during air assaults. You could get thrown out and end up with a 200-foot dive into the jungle. This young soldier was holding on to my web gear as we did a "high G" dive into the LZ on a helicopter assault. About fifteen feet off the ground, suddenly I felt this sudden burning pain in my chest. God! My gut's on fire. And shit! They pulled me back into the helicopter. I thought I'd been hit in the groin from enemy fire from the tree line. However, right above my pubic region and burned into my crotch was the outline of the 7.62mm cartridge which had popped up in the air out of the helicopter door gunner's machinegun and gone down my open fatigue shirt. The cartridge was red hot and lodged in my crotch. That's probably the most exciting war story I can tell. I thought I was dead. I wasn't.

Oh my heavens. Virtually everybody I've interviewed, General McCaffrey, has told me that there was one individual during their life that most influenced them in developing a leadership style. Who would that be in your case?

A now retired Brigadier General named Herb Lloyd. He retired after 35 years of service and ended up in Bosnia as the number two guy for MPRI Corporation putting together the Bosnian/Croatian armies. He is a legend in the U.S. Army. He was an E-7 who had served for two and a half years in

Vietnam before he was commissioned through OCS. I was fortunate that he became my parachute infantry company commander during the Dominican Republic combat intervention. He was a 2nd Lieutenant with 9 or 10 years' service. He had been the youngest E-7, as I remember, in the history of the 82nd Airborne in peacetime. This remarkable soldier from Hope, Arkansas spent almost his entire life as a bachelor warrior. He was once married and has a son he's very close to. He was my company commander in the 82nd. The soldiers worshipped him. So did I. He lived Army Values. In Vietnam we both served together again in Vietnamese Airborne Division in heavy combat.

I also asked him to join a studies and analysis team that I headed as a captain that did a combat leadership study trip to Vietnam in '71. We went to every US combat division in Vietnam and looked at the battle situation at company level. Was the Army unraveling, yes or no? What are the battle realities at company-battalion level? Herb Lloyd joined me on that Vietnam studies deployment. He was a tremendous role model to me of what an infantry combat leader's supposed to act like. A whole series of leadership lessons. How you deal with soldiers. How you never threaten soldiers. Basic leadership -- get up first, go to bed last, eat last, get on the first aircraft into combat. Herb was a model combat leader.

So he practiced those rather than just preach them?

He lived his life that way. He still does. He's still a believer in what he does. He's a remarkable man.

Did you find a lot of your peers who were less than exemplary leaders?

The leaders I encountered during my early days in the 82nd were better than what was the reality late in the war in Vietnam. The pre-Vietnam 82nd Airborne had these powerful senior NCOs with their discipline and their professionalism and their years of service. All that disappeared and we ended up fighting a war with a bunch of 19-year-old boys -- and 20 to 22-year-old lieutenants and captains. The officers were not Regular Army. They were not ROTC DMG graduates. They didn't go to Ranger School. They weren't West Pointers. The Sergeants weren't NCO Academy graduates. I mean, the young soldiers and buck sergeants were a bunch of teenagers. However, they were splendid fighters. The kind of fighting we were doing was small unit infantry warfare. However, the young officers were a challenge. It is difficult to be an effective captain -- infantry company commander -- if you don't really have training and experience to handle artillery, mortars, airstrikes, airlift and logistics. That's a problem. But you can be a good infantry squad leader at the age of 20 and these kids were. I saw a lot of great leadership in Vietnam. But, you know, the captains and lieutenants were an inexperienced lot.

General, looking back on your career, has the media tempered in any way the effectiveness of senior leadership because of the scrutiny it provides?

The Vietnam experience was a very bitter one for not just the senior officers but those of us who were lieutenants and captains. We emerged from the war with a fundamental distrust of the media. I thought we'd lost the war

in Vietnam, not because of our own tactical failures – but because the country had lost faith in the struggle. I believed that a lot of that was due to both ineffective national political leadership, as well as the scathing criticism of the war in the media. I think the country came out of Vietnam with a crippled view of their own Armed Forces. We had a very antagonistic view of journalists by the end of the war. There's about eight, nine year groups of us that fought that Vietnam War. I was among the early year groups of Vietnam Vets. I think military officers were poorly prepared to deal with the news media. We suffered for it for years thereafter.

One of the things I have tried to do as a senior officer was to better understand and recognize that the news media were central to being an effective democracy. When I commanded the 24th ID in Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia – my orders were that the real public affairs officers would be the officers wearing green command tabs. My orders were that if you're a company or battery commander, a battalion commander, a brigade commander -- you will personally deal with the news media. You will tell them "here's what I'm doing", make sure they're fed, get them transportation, keep them alive, and then get out of their way. I think we finally worked our way out of a distorted relation with journalists -- but Vietnam left us with a sour taste in our mouths.

Can I infer from that, General, that you are a proponent of an officer's ability to deal effectively with the media?

Absolutely. Without question. It started to sweep over me when I was a brigadier general at Fort Benning watching us deal with a caustic, distorted, corrosive Sixty Minutes TV documentary effort to attack the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. But how do we deal with news media? My view was you have to keep bringing them in. You may get sandbagged by *60 Minutes* -- but if you can articulate a rational case for what you are doing then most reporters are smart, objective people. They actually are just working stiffs. They have a job to do. Over time we can make the case for effective national security. We are much better at dealing with the media today. The media also knows that the US Armed Forces are the most trusted institution in American society.

There are lots of people around the world who have no military experience and their only exposure to it has been the media. They are suspicious of these generals and these admirals who are so confident standing there talking in front of the microphone, in front of a camera. Why is that? Rather than accepting the fact that they are polished and they're thorough, people are suspicious because of that.

Well, it's an interesting thought. The best thing that happened to us since Vietnam to reestablish our credentials to the American people - were live TV interviews during Desert Storm. For the first time since Vietnam -- the American people, night after night, got to listen directly to a range of average military leaders. That's what we are, average two-stars, average three-stars. Average Lt. Colonels. Average 1st Sergeants. We were on live TV and we were talking about the reality of combat. Our buns were on the line. Our

reputations. And it was their kids, the country's kids. The American people came out of that war saying "hmm, these people sound like they know what they're doing. They sound serious and intelligent." We were all of that. We were determined we weren't going to wreck the country's honor and lose our soldiers in a failed effort.

By the way, younger reporters don't feel animosity towards the Armed Forces. A new generation has come along. Now the young men and women in the news media don't necessarily start with any particular biases. I know there's still a cultural skepticism, there's distrust. But it is rapidly fading. Remember -- the US Armed Forces are the most respected institution in American society. Hands down, year after year. There's a reason for it. The American people hear their daughters and sons write home and tell them we are an institution of courage, integrity, and competence.

I think there's been an inadequate dialog between some parts of society and our military leadership. I still see it. When I'm dealing with the American people on the drug issue -- my perception is there's a fascination with the fact that I'm a general. There's tremendous deference and respect accorded me because of it. But they're also sort of surprised at how reasonable and compassionate I sound in real life. This is a remnant of the legacy of distrust from Vietnam.

The senior Armed Forces leadership deals with young people and gets them to perform in extraordinary ways with machinery and resources on

confusing, dangerous missions. We do that by being sensitive and knowing our military business and taking care of people. We make sure there's a clear-cut organization to direct them. The Armed Forces are actually extremely good at our business. And I still think it surprises some in the American audience when they discover this.

Well, that's an interesting point. I remember several years ago when I was talking about that same issue with General Bill Richardson, and he was mentioning that the generals of his time, which were close to the generals of your time, were so much different than when he was first in the Army because they're accessible, they're responsive, and while they've changed, so have the enlisted people. They're no longer afraid to confront you. They're no longer hesitant to come up and ask you a tough question. Now, there are a lot of, unfortunately, a lot of retired generals from a generation of two generations ago who couldn't deal with that. How has your generation been able to do that?

By the way, General Richardson is, in my view, part of the American nobility of military leadership. He's just an extraordinary man. A rare kind of person. It's not just his intellect, or his kindness, or his complete lack of ego in dealing with things. He's been a tremendous influence on the Army in so many ways. So is General Donn Starry. But I think Richardson may be one of a dozen people that made the Army the huge success it was in Desert Storm. He's really remarkable.

I wouldn't be critical of military leaders from the era of World War II and Korea and say they couldn't have dealt with modern challenges. They were in a different American culture – both military and civilian culture. They were in a culture where there was a draftee force, soldiers were young boys. Few of them were women. They weren't operating sophisticated equipment. By and large it was a very different environment.

Now the new American military culture came across most dramatically in the buildup to Desert Storm and Desert Shield. It was the most wonderful experience of my life. Had I quit at the end of the Desert Storm ground campaign and gone straight to the next world -- I couldn't have ended my life on a better note. I knew we were going to win the air-ground campaign. During that Desert Shield buildup we were in the field training with our soldiers for six months prior to the air-ground attack. It was just an incredible experience. Before we actually executed the "left-hook" ground attack, I went to each 24th Infantry Division battalion – thirty-six battalions as I remember - and talked to our soldiers. Talked to them for 45 minutes - 800 troops sitting around in a semicircle. Then I answered questions. Then stayed on after the group question and answer period for individual questions. My 24th ID Command Sergeant Major Jim Randolph joined me in these sessions. The IG and the division surgeon also. We were sensing what was going on with our soldiers.

The modern American soldier in Desert Storm was 22 years old. Possibly married. High school graduate. A year of college. Smart as a whip. A multiple volunteer -- volunteer for the Army, volunteer for the infantry. When I would

get off the helicopter to visit a battalion in 24th ID prior to the ground assault -- young soldiers in their first interaction with me would walk over and say, "Sir, can I have my picture taken with you, because I want to send my mother a picture." They'd ask me to autograph letters home to their dads. These beautiful young people -- what an incredible change in their relationship to their senior leaders. They didn't look at me as a division commander. I was like their dad or coach. They all knew who I was.

By the way, they also not only asked tough questions, they got answers. In a 900-soldier battalion, they'd ask me questions about what was going on in the Middle East. It was clear to me they were reading *Time Magazine* and listening to BBC, and they knew all about Jordan and Iraq and what was going on. It was astonishing. American soldiers are just a remarkable lot. It was hard to imagine screwing up the Desert Storm operation with such superb soldiers and battle leaders.

The Army is an organization that will fight. It will start deploying tonight. The Army will throw itself in harm's way. Our soldiers will carry out orders that might result in their own death. We have created a unique military culture.

America is not a militaristic society. So we've taken these American youngsters, and we've imbued them very quickly with a unique Army value system. They stand up when their Captain or Sergeant comes in the room. They'll do things in battle without questioning. They'll live Army values.

One of the biggest challenges we may have over the coming 25-50 years is our national political leadership won't necessarily have served in the Armed Forces. I think it's going to be difficult for some of them to understand. They're going to need to be historians. They're going to need to have a broad vision to understand why it is that the Marine Corps or Army Rangers or Navy carrier pilots have such power and self-discipline. We as free citizens need to thank God for the existence of the United States Armed Forces. Because we're going to be in peril if we don't have a military with the strong value system of courage, discipline, and honor.

The US Armed Forces are there to fight. They are very respectful of civilian authority. However, the Armed Forces don't look like the University of Indiana. And it never will. We then need to go back periodically and explain all of this to the country. Some of us who are retired I think can help with that. We can help educate America on the requirements to maintain a world-class fighting force.

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