

**Missouri State Fair – Military Appreciation Day**  
**LTG Robert L. Caslen, Jr.**  
**Missouri State Fairgrounds, Sedalia, MO**  
**15 August 2010**

Good afternoon. Thank you for that kind introduction. It is always great to visit the Show-Me State and Sedalia. It gives me an excuse to stop by the “Wheel Drive-in” and get myself a “Goober Burger”. I want to thank Governor Nixon and Congressman Skelton for their inspiring words and presence here today as we honor our Military Heroes past and present. I am truly honored and humbled to be asked to speak with you today on such a momentous occasion for our Nation’s military.

One of our Nation’s defining Presidents, Abraham Lincoln, once said, “Let us have faith that right makes might, and...dare to do our duty as we understand it.”

These words epitomize our military’s ethical charter, extended to us by the American people, and defined by the ideals and precepts of our Constitution. As we enter our 9<sup>th</sup> year of continuous war, our Nation faces an uncertain future - a future that will most certainly require the service and continued sacrifice of our Nation’s military men and women. As our Nation and its military embark into this uncertain future, we must ever be mindful of President Lincoln’s words – to solemnly do our moral duty and earnestly hope that ‘right makes might’.

As Americans, we are a people defined by our moral character. Indeed, many of our forefathers came here in order to flee religious persecution in their native lands. These immigrants, from the Pilgrims to the Quakers to the Mennonites, boldly forged out new lives for themselves in the frontiers of America. Many of Missouri’s early pioneers were just such people.

Our forefathers’ hard work, perseverance and strong moral ethic helped shape our country’s beginnings and define our Nation’s character. Our Founding Fathers were in many cases, men such as these - men of substance – whose character was born out of sacrifice and moral conviction. They understood and rejected the yoke of oppression – they knew full well the heavy price that must be paid to earn and maintain their freedom. Their vision enabled the creation of a radically new concept in the world – a nation, governed by and subservient to its people, committed to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice for all. The ultimate manifestation of our forefathers’ ideals can be seen in the instrument that established the American experiment in freedom: our Nation’s Constitution.

The pure genius of the US Constitution still evokes awe in us today. Apart from the freedoms extended to us in its Bill of Rights, the Constitution also serves as the source document from which we derive our military’s authorities. The governmental roadmap established by the Constitution clearly delineates the military’s subservient role to the people and civilian authority of the military. Indeed, the Constitution establishes a client relationship between the military and the citizens of this Nation. Our client status requires us to maintain a healthy and confidence-inspiring relationship with

our bosses. **Trust** is, and always has been, the cornerstone of this relationship. Said another way, it is incumbent on all of us in uniform to earn your trust and then to maintain it.

We in the Army know all too well the heavy price that must be paid for failing to maintain the trust of the people.

In the aftermath of our Nation's last persistent conflict, Vietnam, our Army faced a crisis of trust. Our relationship with the American people had been strained and as an institution, it required us to become introspective and examine all facets of what defined us ethically as a profession. And as a result, we enacted sweeping internal reforms and reinforced our Professional Military Ethic in our professional military education. But this took time and it was only after many years of demonstrated adherence to our Nation's principles and values that we were able to restore the trust of the American people.

I would offer that the key ingredient that makes this difference is leadership. Leadership grounded in the principles of a Professional Ethic – whose foundation can be found in the ideals and precepts of our Constitution.

Our leaders today at every level of the Army face extraordinarily complex and uncertain situations on a daily basis. Confronted by these unique and taxing circumstances, influenced by character, values, and a collective ethic, our leaders invariably will strive to make the right decisions, and thus preserve the trust we must maintain with the clients whom we serve.

But it is not easy and this has not always been the case. Take Abu Ghraib for example – where we saw a failure of leadership result not only in a loss of confidence, but in the rallying of extremist Islam to join the Jihad. Fortunately this leadership failure was countered by the great work of many other leaders over a number of years.

Our Nation's military is a reflection of you - the people of the United States. Our military is an all volunteer force, comprised of citizens from all walks of life throughout our country. We are a microcosm of our society – where all our country's races, religions, and creeds – equally share in the task of defending our Nation and its Constitution. Consequently, our military's character and ethic is a reflection of your own. We stand for the principles and values that you and our Nation hold dear. We are always mindful that our actions and undertakings should, at all times, reflect this fact. Our all-volunteer military is comprised of your neighbors, friends, and relatives, who have answered America's call to service during a time of war.

I would like to tell you the story of one such American that answered America's call to service during war:

Rick Rescorla was not born of this country. He came to this country from his native England in 1963, and entered the United States Army shortly thereafter. His natural leadership abilities were identified early on. Having graduated from Basic Training, Rick was selected to attend Officer Candidate School and Airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon graduation Rick was assigned to 2d Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup>

Cavalry Division. It was here that he would learn lasting lessons in service and sacrifice.

In November 1965 a young 2LT Rick Rescorla found himself leading his men during America's first major battle of the Vietnam War, the Battle of the Ia Drang. The battle was a vicious, guttural affair, and was vividly described by the commanding officer of the battle, LTC Hal Moore, and war correspondent Joe Galloway in their book, *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young*.

In the book, Moore described Rescorla as "the best platoon leader I ever saw." Rescorla's men nicknamed him "Hard Core" for his bravery in battle, and revered him for his good humor and compassion towards his men.

Shortly after the Battle of Ia Drang commenced, Rescorla was ordered to move out to seize the high ground surrounding the landing zone. He immediately led his platoon forward through the brush towards an enemy that they knew was lying in wait. As he did this, his image was captured by a combat cameraman – this iconic photograph adorns the cover of Moore and Galloway's book. In the picture, his face muscles are taut and eyes wide under the brow of his helmet. His eyes look almost white because they are open so wide....intense anxiety is plainly evident in LT Rescorla's face. He is very clearly afraid...afraid that his life may be snuffed out at any moment, yet he moves with his M-16 at the ready, clenched firmly in his hands, its bayonet fixed – a Soldier dutifully doing what is asked of him despite the danger.

The picture – captured in a moment of desperation and sheer terror – is a powerful image of a Soldier doing his duty in combat. It's quite probable that LT Rescorla didn't really know why it was necessary to move his platoon forward and take the high ground, but he felt a compelling responsibility both to his fellow Soldiers and unit to do his duty. Rescorla did his duty that day earning a Silver Star for his valor. Yet, this was not the last time that his nation would require his service and his ultimate sacrifice.

The final chapter of the Rick Rescorla story is even more moving. On September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, Rick was serving as Vice President of Security for Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in its headquarters in the South Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. After the building was struck on that fateful morning, Rescorla calmly and expertly directed over 2700 employees to safety down the fire escape stair wells of the South Tower. Rescorla also oversaw the evacuation of another 1000 employees from the World Trade Building #5. When an old Army buddy, Dan Hill, reached him on the phone that day, Rescorla could be heard barking orders calmly and collectedly through a bullhorn. He exhorted his fellow employees to "be proud to be Americans...everyone will be talking about you tomorrow".

After the last of the employees had evacuated the South Tower, he took his security team back *into* the building to make a final sweep to ensure everyone had escaped safely. When one of his colleagues urged him to evacuate as well, Rescorla replied, "As soon as I make sure everyone else is out". He was last seen alive on the

tenth floor, moving towards danger much in the same way he had done 36 years prior at the Battle of Ia Drang. Rick Rescorla certainly knew the mortal danger he faced, yet did his duty for his fellow man.

Rick Rescorla was not the last hero to die in our Nation's Global War on Terror. His actions along with hundreds of others that momentous day sparked a renewed era of sacrifice and service in our country.

Many in this country do not yet fully realize the incredible value and impact that this 9/11 generation is having, and will continue to have, on our society - for they are a humble, resilient and selfless generation. They all remember exactly where they were 9 years ago when the planes went into the World Trade Center, and into the field in PA, and into the Pentagon. They are volunteers all of them, and our Country has placed the security of our Nation on their backs, again, and again, and again. And yet despite the repeated sacrifices, they have answered the call to duty each time, and stood in the gap between the evil that is out there and our way of life. They have never wavered or questioned. They quietly stand among the generations of Americans that have gone before, standing in the gap between the evil that is out there, and the values of our Nation and our way of life.

I have no doubts that history will gloriously record their service and sacrifice, for it has protected the free world from tyranny and evil, and has restored freedom and inspired hope where it was absent. As was the case with our forefathers, they do not seek exclusion and intolerance and violence, but rather they seek moderation, and tolerance, and inclusion. They protect, defend, and advocate for the downtrodden and defenseless. They are indeed a reflection of you – the American people.

In closing, I ask that we all remember those service members who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our Nation. We are forever indebted to them for their service and sacrifice.

May we also remember those that are, at this very moment, standing watch for us around the globe in the name of freedom and democracy.

God bless the great state of Missouri

May God bless and protect our Service members in harm's way, as well as their families back home.

And may God continue to bless the United States of America!

Army Strong!