

The 26th Infantry Regiment and the Future of the Army

Remarks at the Regiment's Centennial Celebration

Bad Kissingen, Germany, 2 February 2001

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I was asked to talk tonight about the future of the Army because I have been working with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency on technology and concepts for land warfare in the decades ahead. In that work I often have occasion to remind brilliant engineers and inventors that soldiers must be understood as teams of teams, and that teamwork is as much the product of the past as it is of the present and the future. Many of you are of an age when you believe, as I once did, that all that counts is the here and the now, and you are prepared, as once was I, to disregard what is past, and to face what is to come with that confidence that only youth can muster. As such notions apply to infantry units, they are serious misapprehensions. And so tonight I propose to talk about the 26th Infantry's first century of service as the necessary grounding for the century of service that lies ahead.

Our Regimental motto proclaims the palm of victory must be earned. One reason for this celebration is to remember the Blue Spaders who by their deeds established its fine reputation. But as we look ahead, we need to remember that the palms of victory are often the source of the ashes of defeat, and the operative word for coming generations of Blue Spaders remains "earn". Any infantry unit, being fundamentally designed around men, not machines, is constantly changing, reflecting the goings and comings of the men in its ranks, and the ebb and flow of their accumulated experience. An infantry unit can not maintain status quo; it either gets better or it gets worse. An infantry unit becomes better only very slowly, day by day, learning by its successes and failures, adding to its collective consciousness, building teamwork and cohesion, mastering equipment, tactics, and techniques, and developing leaders. But an infantry unit becomes worse very quickly: In only weeks, even days, its vital capital of teamwork and esprit can be squandered by poor leadership, neglected professionalism, or adverse circumstance. Let no one here tonight doubt that there will be ample challenges in the decades ahead for Blue Spaders wherein they who come after you will have to earn their own laurels.

The United States Army is being transformed for force projection. Over the past century the 26th Infantry has served on every continent in the world except South America and Australia, and in every sort of combat environment: mountains, deserts, dense forest, rolling farmland, cities, in cold and snow and in tropical heat. It has proved its versatility in amphibious assaults in Africa, Sicily, and Normandy, in airmobile operations in Vietnam, and in mechanized operations in NATO. Its soldiers early learned that sometimes they will be called upon to perform missions that not all the American people support, for some of the regiment's most arduous and controversial service has been in Asian jungles, where every mail bag that arrived in the 26th conveyed to its soldiers letters criticizing the recipient for his service. I mean, of course, the jungles of Luzon and Samar in the Philippines as well as the jungles of Vietnam. Most Americans today have no idea of the public opposition in the United States to the role of the Army in the Philippine Insurrection, but some historians would argue that maintaining military

morale and efficiency was as difficult in the first decade of the last century as it was in the Vietnam War of the 1960s.

Like every infantry unit, the 26th Infantry has had its “downs” as well as its “ups”. In 1912 the 26th Infantry was stationed in two forts in Michigan, along the Canadian border, where comfortable living and light duty had led to a decline in military proficiency. In that year a Lieutenant Colonel reported into the Regiment who happened to be a close friend of the Chief of Staff of the Army. In a letter to the Chief, the lieutenant colonel described the 26th as an infantry unit gone sour: the regimental commander, an old colonel, rode out on exercises in a vehicle attended by a dozen orderlies. The troops did not carry full field packs, and training never lasted beyond the early afternoon. So many men were on detached duty that the regiment was a skeleton of demoralized officers and enlisted shirkers. The 26th had failed its annual Inspector General’s inspection with total unconcern. This letter led to the relief of the aging regimental commander, and assignment of Colonel Robert Lee Bullard, a younger, much more energetic leader.

Bullard was convinced that the Army’s weakness was a distaste for military training and a passion for housekeeping. He had observed in the Japanese Army one man mowing grass while a brigade trained; in the 26th Infantry a battalion cut grass while a squad drilled. Bullard’s remedies included strenuous marches, intensive marksmanship training, and repeated field exercises designed to condition the troops and to cure his officers of what he termed Leavenworthitis: too much emphasis on maneuver, and not enough on closing with the enemy. In 1913 Bullard and the Regiment, now widely admired, were transferred to the Mexican border, where a state of not-war-not-peace prevailed, duty that lasted until the national mobilization in 1917 for World War I.

Bullard was eventually promoted from the 26th Regiment to command the 1st Division in its initial campaigns in France in May -June 1918. He was a newly appointed corps commander in July 1918 when the 1st Division counter-attacked into the flank of a deep German penetration south of Soissons, France. The 26th Infantry there fought for five days across wheat fields laced with barbed wire entanglements, raked by artillery, and swept by intense machine gun fires. The regimental commander, Colonel Hamilton Smith, and his executive officer were killed in action. All the other field grade officers and most of the company officers and senior NCOs also became casualties. The battalions were commanded by junior captains, companies by NCOs, and the remnants of platoons and squads by privates. Bullard remembered that the Regiment’s duty along the Mexican border had scattered it into very small detachments protecting border ranches, settlements, and villages. “This service,” he wrote, “had developed the few engaged to a most astonishing degree. With the feeling of self-reliance and sense of responsibility, the private became fit to be a non-com, and the N.C. O. fit to be an officer....” At Soissons the 26th Infantry Regiment proved itself ready for its trial by fire.

In the future, will development of self-reliance and responsibility be on the Mission Essential Task List for training Blue Spaders?

A quarter of a century after World War I, in 1943, after the Regiment invaded North Africa, such readiness was found wanting. The Regimental Commander then was Colonel Alexander N. Stark, known as “Old Stark.” A clumsy corps commander had committed the 1st Infantry

Division piecemeal, strewing its infantry in penny packets across Tunisia in front of two advancing German armies. On 29 January 1943, the 26th Infantry, less its 2d and 3d Battalions, was attached to Combat Command A, 1st Armored Division, and ordered to join in counterattacking elements of the 21st Panzer Division that had driven the French out of the Faid Pass.

1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was feeling pretty good about itself, for three days earlier, on 26 January, at night and in a cold driving rain, it had marched on foot through six miles of mud, then assaulted with bayonets fixed, driving Italian soldiers from a heavily fortified position in the Ousseltia Valley, taking 90 prisoners. But at the Faid Pass, the enemy was different. Inter-unit and inter-arm coordination was deplorably bad, and the Blue Spaders were clearly outclassed by German tactics and German weapons. Two Spader counterattacks disintegrated under mortar and artillery fires. 1st Battalion sustained serious losses. Eventually it was sent to the rear, bearing no palms, blamed by CCA for the failure of the operation.

Combined arms as well as bayonets were needed to defeat the Germans at Faid; combined arms will be essential in the decades ahead.

Two weeks after the Faid Pass battles, on 18 February, 1943, the corps commander had divided the 26th Infantry Regiment among three widely separated sectors: Regimental Headquarters and 3d Battalion blocked a road into the south of the corps; 1st Battalion was more than 35 miles away to the northeast, attached to the 19th Engineer Group, defending the Kasserine Pass and the center of the corps zone; 2d Battalion was some 30 miles further to the northeast on the corps' north flank. At 2000 on the 18th, the corps commander telephoned Colonel Stark and issued him an order in these words: "I want you to go up to Kasserine Pass right away, and pull a Stonewall Jackson. Take over up there." The Regimental command post displaced at midnight, arriving at the positions of 1st Battalion in the early morning of 19 February. Just as Colonel Stark assumed command, the Germans began to clear paths through the American minefields blocking the road running west from the town of Kasserine into the corps rear.

The mines in front of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, afforded little protection from armor, and even less from infantry. The previous day 1st Battalion had requested the 19th Engineer Group to improve its minefields, and that evening, an engineer officer was detailed to provide technical supervision for a Blue Spader platoon that was to bury the mines. Around midnight a truck from 1st Battalion picked up the engineer and a load of anti-tank mines. The night was cold and black, the roads were slippery from rain. About 0130 on the 19th the truck reached the command post of Company C, 26th Infantry, whose foxholes overlooked the throat of Kasserine Pass. The engineer located the company executive officer, but the latter knew nothing about the requested mines, and suggested that the engineer drive eastward toward Kasserine, where he would undoubtedly meet someone who could show him where the mines were to be laid. The engineer drove on for two or three miles meeting no one. He then returned to the company command post, where he insisted that the company commander be awakened. The company commander remembered the mine plan, but it was 0330 before one of his lieutenants and a dozen soldiers reported to the engineer. "What do you want us to do?" asked the infantry officer. The engineer responded that he expected the officer to tell him where to put the minefield, and that his men were to lay the mines. The infantry officer was of little help: he had no idea of where the

minefield ought to go, or from where it would be covered by fire; the Blue Spaders were totally untrained in handling mines. With daylight fast approaching, the engineer elected to strew the mines between an embankment on one side of the road through the Pass, and a hillside 100 yards away on the other side. Since infantry entrenching tools were of little use in digging in the stony soil, the mines ended up on top of the ground, uncovered by fire, in a pattern that might slow German tanks for all of ten minutes or so.

The German attack, when it came on the afternoon of 19 February, was directed personally by General Erwin Rommel. German infantrymen climbed the high ground above the Pass defended by Company A, 26th Infantry, captured over one hundred Americans, and disrupted radio and wire communications within 1st Battalion, while German armor probed at the Pass itself. The following morning, 20 February, amid dense fog, the Germans attacked aggressively into the Pass. Corps hastily sent reinforcements from the U.S. 39th Infantry Regiment, but by noon the enemy had broken through the 19th Engineer Group's defenses, were moving to envelop those of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, and threatening the firing batteries of the 33d Field Artillery, in direct support of Stark's command. One battery of the 33d was overrun, and the others driven out of their positions. At 2030 that night the command post of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was overrun by German troops of the 21st Panzer Division. The commander of 1st Battalion was taken prisoner, but posing as a doctor, managed later to escape, and next day was able to reassemble the remnants of his shattered battalion. Among the infantry under Colonel Stark's command — 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry and three companies of the 39th Infantry — there were 30 KIA, 100 WIA, and 350 MIA.

Rommel's effort to drive through Kasserine Pass was successful, but the following day, 21 February, as the attackers drove beyond the Pass, they were stopped by elements of the British 26th Armored Brigade, and CCB of the U.S. 1st Armored Division. Reinforced by infantry of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division, and supported by the just-arrived 9th Division Artillery, the Allied force repulsed Rommel's assaults, and drove the attackers back toward the Pass. On 22 February the weather cleared, and the U.S. Army Air Force entered the fray, hastening the enemy withdrawal.

The artillery commander of the 1st Division, after investigating the 33d's loss of its howitzers, recommended that either Colonel Stark or he be relieved of command. Stark was sent back to the United States. Major General Terry Allen of the 1st Infantry Division regained command of all his regiments, and promptly launched an intensive training program to teach hard-learned lessons about German tactics and weapons, about mine and countermine techniques, about inter-arms cooperation, and about night operations. By the end of the month of March, he gauged the 26th Infantry ready to attack in the van of George Patton's offensive against Rommel's forces at El Guettar. There the Blue Spaders mounted determined night attacks that dislodged the enemy from fortifications on mountaintops and dominating ridges.

There are three morals to these war stories. The first is that no infantry unit can afford to believe that it is good enough, for training is necessary even amid combat to adapt to the unforeseen, and the best training in war or peace must be stressful enough to teach units how to cope with the unexpected. The second is that any military unit, of whatever size, is a team among teams, seldom better than the command in which it operates, and from which it draws support and

strength through cooperation and coordination. The third is that, on the scales of combat, competence and leadership weigh heavily at squad, at platoon, at company, and at battalion.

Exceptionally good company commanders are a known combat multiplier. Over the years some units have had more than their share, but few have been as well-served as Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, the Kasserine Pass example notwithstanding. I would cite as evidence four of its commanders in three wars: Gilliam in 1917-1918, Ferry and Lister in 1944-1945, and Madden in 1966.

In 1917, Major Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., United States Reserves, took command of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, facing nine months of rigorous training in France without much expertise to draw on for instructors. In the American Expeditionary Forces two out of three privates, six out of ten noncommissioned officers, and five of ten company commanders had no prewar service. Pershing's prescribed training regimen emphasized close-order drill, rifle practice, and field exercises. Teddy Roosevelt wrote after the war that "in the First Battalion we were particularly fortunate in having with us Captain Amiel Frey, and Lieutenants Freml and Gilliam, all three of whom had served as N.C.O.'s in the regular Army. They understood close-order work, the service rifle, and the handling of men."

Lt. Rexie E. Gilliam, who had been commissioned upon mobilization in 1917, commanded Roosevelt's Company C (Frey had Co A, Freml Co D). In April 1918, to meet a strong German thrust at the boundary between the French and the British north of Paris, the 26th was pulled from a quiet sector, and marched to reinforce the Allies at Cantigny. Your Regimental Association has a picture that shows Lt. Gilliam and his platoon leaders at a break on that march. Like other AEF officers, Gilliam carries a walking cane — but on Gilliam's cane, there is a very feminine, very fancy French garter.

Captain Frey was killed in action in May 1918, Lt. Freml in June, both near Cantigny. Gilliam survived until July, when he was cited in Brigade Orders for gallantry at Soissons (that is the equivalent of earning the modern Silver Star):

1st Lieut. R. E. Gilliam, National Army, 26th Infantry. Led his company over the top four consecutive days. On the last day he was severely wounded. His splendid example at all times kept the morale of his men at the highest point. His coolness and judgment saved his command on several occasions.

In 1944, Lt. Col. Frank Murdoch, Cavalry, USA, here present, commanded the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry during its training in England for the Normandy invasion, and from the beachhead through the Falaise Gap. He was wounded and hospitalized, but then went AWOL from a rehabilitation center in England to return to the Regiment in time for the Battle of the Bulge. Colonel Murdoch commanded 3d Battalion during the drive across the center of Germany, concluding the war in command of the 26th Infantry Regiment. He rates two company commanders above all others he observed in action, Captains Ferry and Lister, both commanders of Company C.

Allan B. Ferry was commissioned from ROTC, and joined the 26th Infantry in 1941 (when the regiment was once more under the command of Col. "Teddy" Roosevelt). Murdoch remembers Ferry as "older, and more deliberate than other captains, but he paid attention to details, and was genuinely fired up about infantry training and infantry tactics. He was a large man, and he had the respect of every man in his company. He and Dr. Leonard, my surgeon, had been boxers, and when the 82d Airborne Division arrived, the two of them went off to town and came back a bit bloody, but happy." Ferry himself wrote after the war that "we had trained hard in England and according to British standards it was 'better to have 10 percent casualties in training than to have 50 percent in combat.' We used close-in support fires and made battle training as realistic as possible. I was never so proud of a group of men in my life as I was when we went into Normandy. You couldn't tell the veteran from the recruit. They were that good."

Ferry led Company C out of the Normandy beachhead, across France and Belgium, and penetrated the Siegfried Line. He was a principal in the actions at Stolberg that won for the 1st Battalion the Presidential Unit Citation, but he was captured, and spent the rest of the war as a POW.

Donald W. Lister took over Company C after Ferry. He was a former Regular who had reenlisted at Pearl Harbor for the 26th Infantry. He landed in North Africa as a Browning Automatic Rifleman, rose quickly through the ranks, winning a Silver Star and lieutenant bars, then leading a platoon during the conquest of Sicily. In Normandy he was Murdoch's Communications Officer and understudy. Lister led Company C ably through the Hürtgen Forest, and in the fierce defense of the north shoulder of the Bulge at Bütgenbach. Company C opened the regiment's counteroffensive in January 1945, and attacked with the 26th across Germany into Czechoslovakia. Frank Murdoch recalled the final offensive in the Harz Mountains, April 1945:

Colonel John McDonald of the 14th Cavalry had my Company C attached to him most of time in that operation. He thought the world of Captain Lister and his men. He called them the most aggressive, fightingest outfit he had ever seen. He found Lister amazingly attentive to details, like check-firing weapons at the start of an operation. There's a lesson there. Don Lister had been a private in the 26th, a BAR man with natural leadership ability, and he eventually became a platoon sergeant. There were a lot of officer casualties, so Lister was promoted to 2d Lieutenant ... I strongly suspect that a lot of the strength of the 1st Division was in the high proportion of officers it had who had come up through the ranks...

In 1966, I took command of 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry as its members approached the end of their one-year tour in Vietnam (the battalion had arrived together the previous September). Among my first officer replacements was Captain Jim L. Madden, whom I assigned to command Company C.

Under Madden, the company became known for its uncanny ability to find the elusive enemy, and to fight him decisively. I wrote on his efficiency report that "Madden put squads to jobs that in other outfits were assigned to platoons, and maneuvered platoons as though they were companies. He was a masterful tactician, a determined trainer, and a stickler for detail on what soldiers wore and how they cared for their equipment. I could count on him to be immediately on

my radio net when I called him. He knew how to use mortars, artillery, and air support. Above all, he was a fighter."

Jim L. Madden was an exceptionally tall West Pointer —6'8"— who volunteered for the 26th from a staff position in an aviation unit near Saigon. Throughout August and September, the turnover in his company was high, and Madden saw to it that its training was as intense as its combat actions. The company learned to master airmobile operations, and both by day and by night to clear along the country roads, and to maneuver amid the triple-canopy riverside jungles, across rice paddies, and through the dense underbrush of second-growth forest.

On 25 August 1966 Madden was wounded twice while leading his company into battle against a well-entrenched enemy battalion, and evacuated. As soon as he could walk, Madden went AWOL from the hospital to return to the 26th. Still bandaged, he served for a time as my Operations Officer, but when he was better, I allowed him to return to command of Company C, there to complete the first of three tours in Vietnam. He told me that "I have never had a more rewarding job, before or since."

Of the soldiers of the 26th Infantry you have only to read the citations of its four Medal of Honor winners on the Regimental Association's web site: one from Sicily, one from the Hürtgen Forest, one from the Battle of the Bulge, and one from Vietnam, testimony to young soldiers with strong hearts and extraordinary determination, examples for all in the future. In World War I Teddy Roosevelt, the regimental commander at the end of the war, described his soldiers as "Average Americans," many of them immigrants, mostly volunteers. In World War II also many were volunteers, preponderantly from the northeastern United States, many of whom joined the Regiment at Plattsburg, New York or Fort Devens, Massachusetts, to serve for four or more years as Blue Spaders. Hundreds of World War II veterans are still active in your Regiment's Association, returning annually to our reunions, and writing for our quarterly newsletters; the years have taken their toll, however, and they now comprise just 37% of the Association's membership. "Once a Blue Spader, Always a Blue Spader" applies as well to veterans of the Cold War era. Association members include those from the Regiment in Bamberg, 1945-1955, from the Battle Groups at Fort Riley 1955-1962, and Baumholder and Fort Benning, 1959 to 1962; from 1st Battalion at Fort Riley 1963-1965, and from 1st Battalion in Vietnam, 1965 to 1971. Blue Spaders have long been in the vanguard of NATO, here in Germany; we have members from the alliance's earliest years through the 1st Battalion's presence in Göppingen, 1971-1983, and now from the 1st Battalion's presence at Schweinfurt, 1996 to the present. And we have members from the Regiment's years in TRADOC, training recruits at Forts Dix and Jackson, 1987-1996. I know of no other veteran's organization that so well memorializes the experiences of American infantry in the century just completed, from the Philippine Insurrection through the Balkans. The Association needs many more members from the 1st Battalion here tonight so as to be able to serve your successors in the years ahead.

Concerning non-commissioned officers, the Blue Spaders have been fortunate in men like Frey, Freml, Gilliam and Lister who served both as sergeants and as officers. The incomparable Sergeant Ted Dobil, who served in K Company throughout World War II, and went on to spend a total of 26 years in the 26th Infantry, became the very first NCO in the U.S. Army to be appointed Command Sergeant Major. General William E. Depuy, one commander of the 1st

Infantry Division in Vietnam, recorded that this son of Polish immigrants who enlisted in the 26th Infantry just before Hitler invaded Poland, shaped the leadership of the NCO corps of the U.S. Army for an entire generation. When Dobol was a squad leader, Depuy remembered, there were in his squad William O. Woolridge — who was Command Sergeant Major of the Big Red One when he was selected to become the first Sergeant Major of the Army. In that same squad under Sergeant Dobol there were two other soldiers who also rose to become Command Sergeant Majors of the 1st Infantry Division, Command Sergeant Major Cannon, and Command Sergeant Major Venable. (Venable is, I believe, the only divisional Command Sergeant Major ever killed in action.) Indeed, Ted Dobol trained many superb noncoms, and I can attest that 1st Battalion in Vietnam during my tenure of command was much advantaged in that there were a dozen of those Dobol-tutored NCOs serving as Platoon Sergeants and First Sergeants. Moreover, Dobol himself came out from his assignment at West Point to visit the unit in Vietnam, and spent several days among the troops to great good effect.

Incidentally, in Vietnam the radio call-sign of 1st Battalion, 26th was DOBOL. I know of no other example of personal recognition of that sort for an NCO.

I thoroughly agree with General Murdoch that the 26th Infantry's interest in its NCO corps, both for insuring professionalism of its ongoing operations, and for grooming future leaders, commissioned and non-commissioned, has been one of the reasons why this unit has stood out among all others in the U.S. Army, and why this regiment earned a place in today's Active Army. In the future this unit must preserve the fashioning of future leaders as one of its hallmarks.

Concerning officers, there is one figure who looms above all others in the history of the 26th Infantry: Theodore Roosevelt, Junior, eldest son of the 26th President of the United States. In 1917 "Teddy" Roosevelt, then 30 years old, applied for active duty. He held a commission in the reserves as a Major, having paid himself for his training in General Leonard Wood's summer camps for businessmen. Through family connections he made his way to Paris, accompanied by his brother, Archibald, who held a similar commission as a 2d Lieutenant. There the brothers importuned General Pershing for assignments in the 1st Division. Assigned to the 26th Infantry, Teddy was placed in command of 1st Battalion, and Archibald became a platoon leader in one of his companies.

Let me interject a remark about younger brother "Archie." He rose rapidly to captain, became a company commander in the 1st Battalion 26th Infantry, but was so seriously wounded in March 1918 that he was subsequently discharged with 100% disability. When World War II materialized, then 48 years old, he wrote his cousin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32d President of the United States, to ask for recall to active duty. His wish was granted. He was commissioned a Lt. Colonel, and assigned to command a battalion of the 162d Infantry, 41st Infantry Division in New Guinea, 1943-1944. There he was again seriously wounded. He may be the only soldier who was twice discharged with 100% disability for wounds in action.

Teddy Roosevelt rapidly established himself as one of the First Division's best battalion commanders. His 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry distinguished itself in the operations around Cantigny in May and June, 1918, and in the Soissons offensive in July. Teddy Roosevelt was

severely wounded in the leg early in the latter operation, but the battalion he had trained carried on cohesively to its very end.

Roosevelt was bed-ridden for a few weeks, then detailed to the AEF staff school. In October, 1918, during the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the commander of the 1st Division telephoned to ask how his leg was healing. Teddy replied — not altogether truthfully — that the leg was entirely well, whereupon he was offered command of the 26th Infantry Regiment. Without hesitation, and without official approval, Roosevelt went AWOL, hobbled out of the school on a cane, and reported to the Division commander. In the closing week of the war he and the 26th Infantry became principals in an abortive, but highly controversial attempt by the American 1st Army to shoulder aside French forces and to liberate the city of Sedan prior to the armistice. At the end of the war, he marched with the regiment into Germany, and took up occupation duty in the American bridgehead across the Rhein River. He inaugurated a custom within the 26th Regiment of dinners in which there was a formal toast to the 26th Regiment, followed by a toast to the dead of the Regiment. Before he returned to the United States, he was instrumental in founding the organization known thereafter as the American Legion, aimed at keeping alive the brotherhood he had seen in the AEF.

Once demobilized, Teddy followed his father's footsteps into public service and politics, becoming an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the Governor of the Philippines, and the Governor General of Puerto Rico. He was elected to the State legislature, and ran (unsuccessfully) for Governor of New York State. An advocate of what we today refer to as civil rights and equal opportunity, he sat on the boards of Howard University, the N.A.A.C.P., and the Anti-Defamation League. He was at one time President of American Express, and an executive at Doubleday Publishing, but he maintained his reserve status, and was always active in veterans affairs, particularly with the Society of the First Division. You should know that because of Teddy Roosevelt, every year since World War I there has been an annual dinner wherein the participants rise and drink two toasts: one to the 1st Division, and one to its dead.

In early 1941 Teddy Roosevelt, then 54 years of age, asked the Chief of Staff of the Army, General George C. Marshall, to recall him to active duty. Marshall acceded, and Teddy Roosevelt was returned to command of the 26th Infantry Regiment. In 1942 he was promoted to Brigadier General and appointed Assistant Division Commander, assuring command continuity among the major generals who preceded Terry Allen. Teddy was a man of insignificant physique, but he had a booming voice, a winning way with soldiers of all ranks, and endless energy and courage. I have read widely in the operations journals of the 26th Infantry in North Africa and Sicily, and there is scarcely a day without entries reporting that General Roosevelt was forward in the Regiment's zone. I know from talking with veterans that he was universally respected, even loved. Indeed, when, at the end of the conquest of Sicily, General Omar Bradley removed Terry Allen from the 1st Division, and transferred Teddy Roosevelt as well, it was precisely because Teddy was so well regarded. Allen was relieved to sharpen the division for its mission in Normandy; —here I will use Bradley's own words— a relief:

...to save Allen both from himself and from his brilliant record, and to save the division from the heady effects of too much success...Roosevelt's claim on the affections of the 1st Division would present any new division commander with an impossible situation from the start. Any successor of Allen's would find himself in an untenable spot unless I

allowed him to pick his own assistant commander. Roosevelt had to go for he, too, had sinned by loving the division too much...too much brilliance, too much success, too much personality, and too much attachment of the two men for the 1st Division....[That relief was] one of my most unpleasant duties of the entire war.

General Teddy Roosevelt landed at Utah Beach with the 4th Infantry Division in June of 1944, and died in Normandy the following month of a heart attack at age 57, unaware that General Bradley had selected him for promotion and a division command. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism on the invasion beaches. Your Regimental Association has published his citation on our web site along with our others, for at heart, Teddy was, and remains a Blue Spader.

When the 26th Infantry of tomorrow is equipped with the future combat system of systems, perhaps that now being developed, it will have the wherewithal to gain and to maintain initiative with massed effects: organic reconnaissance, surveillance, and targeting capabilities, responsive firepower, ability to maneuver tactically in three-dimensional battlespace, and unprecedented strategic and operational mobility. But trained soldiers will remain its most essential capability. My guess is that future Blue Spaders will have to be no less physically and mentally tough, but more versatile. Present-day branch distinctions will be blurred, following precedents already set in the 26th Infantry by the cavalry officers who commanded its infantry battalions in the drive across Europe in 1944 and 1945, or by General Al Haig, a tanker who commanded 1st Battalion after me in Vietnam. There will be a heightened requirement for strong, competent, resourceful leaders, particularly among the forward-most echelons in combat.

Teddy Roosevelt showed us the way. He left behind for the 26th Infantry Regiment of the future more than solid examples of combat leadership, sound training, and somber ceremonial toasts. He taught that loyalty to the Regiment that caused generations of Blue Spaders to go AWOL from the hospital to return to their unit, confident that no soldier would be prosecuted so long as he traveled toward the sound of the guns. And he left a farewell letter the words of which convey the very message that I hope to leave with you tonight. On 6 August 1943, in Sicily, he wrote as follows:

To the Officers and Men of the First Division:

More than 26 years ago the 1st Division was formed, and I joined it at that time. I have served in it in two wars and have served in no other unit.

We have been together in combat; we know each other as men do when they have been battle comrades. I do not have to tell you what I think of you, for you know. You will always be in my heart.

I have been ordered away. It is a great grief to me, and my hope is that sometime I may return, for it is with you that I feel I belong.

Your record is splendid. You are known as assault troops the world over. You will add in the future new honors to our history.

May luck go with your battle worn colors as glory always has.

Theodore Roosevelt
Brigadier General, U.S. A.