

Combined Arms Center Assumption of Command Ceremony
Eisenhower Auditorium, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
LTG Robert L. Caslen, Jr.
3 March 2010
(Remarks as Prepared)

To the many guests here today – you all honor us with your presence; I'd like to begin by thanking my family and friends for traveling to be part of this exciting moment with Shelly and me. As usual, my wife Shelly continues to stand by me for now over 32 years, and I'd like to thank her for her willingness to continue to serve with me at such an important time for our Army and our nation. Just ask her, and she'll tell you -- it's not because of me that we are standing here today. But we are both excited to become part of the CAC and TRADOC families. Thanks honey – I love you – off we go. And I am also especially excited to have my brother USAF LTC (Retired) Mark Caslen – Mark... thanks for coming all the way out here.

General Dempsey, thank you for your kind words. In turn, and on behalf of all the men and women who so selflessly serve this mission in this community every day, I want to thank you for your unwavering support of our men and women and their Families, and for your vision and your unyielding efforts to ensure that the men and women at the tip of the spear have the doctrine, training, and resources they need to accomplish their missions.

In truth, this is a day to say thanks to many who are present on these historic grounds that have served to shape and guide our Army for many decades and many challenges.

General and Mrs. Arter, it is wonderful to have you here with us this morning. Thank-you very much not only for joining us, but also for your continued great support of Fort Leavenworth and the Command and general Staff College, an institution you once superbly led and which you still support so actively today.

I also want to thank all of the former CAC Commanders and Deputy Commandants here today. Welcome home and I appreciate your continued support to these fine institutions. I look forward to building upon the foundations you so ably constructed in the years past.

COL Donlon, you honor us with your presence. Thank you for continuing to serve our nation through your tireless efforts and continued support of Fort Leavenworth.

Mayor Ken Bernard of Lansing, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Preisinger of Leavenworth, and other civic leaders, it is wonderful to have the leaders of our surrounding communities who so superbly support our mission and our families with us here today.

We are also delighted to have representatives from the Kansas Congressional Delegation – from the offices of Senators Roberts and Brownback, and Congresswoman Jenkins. And from the Kansas state Legislature, Representatives

Meier and O'Brien. Thank-you all for what you do to make this installation the great place it is to work and live. I look forward to getting to know and working with each of you.

There are also several representatives present today from the CGSC Foundation, AUSA, and the Business Executives for National Security. Thanks for your untiring efforts and support for our Army, Soldiers, and Families.

Thank-you as well to the other general officers and CSMs in attendance, especially those from our Schools and Centers within CAC, our International Liaison Officers, Leavenworth's outstanding civilian workforce. All of you remind us why this is such a wonderful community in which to live and work.

Also a special thanks as well to the 399th Army Band from Fort Leonard Wood Missouri and to the Soldiers of the Special Troops Battalion who are serving in the Color Guard – who, I might add, represent not only their unit, but also their fellow Soldiers deployed world-wide. Thanks to all for a truly professional job.

To my new battle buddy, CSM Phil Johndrow, you and your team of NCOs have done a great job today. I look forward to the two of us working together as a command team.

I would also like to recognize the tremendous staff and faculty of this proud institution. First, thanks for the command team – for filling in so ably during this transition and filling the big shoes left by General Caldwell's early departure, and also for your heartfelt reception of Shelly and I.

I also want to recognize the immense talent and dedication of our civilians, retired military and active military staff and faculty. With the mission of teaching a professional military ethic in this profession of arms that we are all about, there is not a more competent, loyal and selfless body of men and women entrusted to develop our military leaders not only in what they must KNOW and DO, but most importantly, what they must BE. All of our Army's senior leadership today is a product of your work, and I know the next generation is well served under your care.

Finally I would be remiss for not recognizing and thanking the tremendous men and women serving in our military today, represented by the students sitting in the seats out front. You all are incredible Soldiers and are members of the 9/11 generation; a generation that saw our nation attacked and elected to be a part of the military while our country was at war knowing full well that you would join a unit deploying to war. You never wavered or questioned - you quietly stand among the generations that have gone before you, standing in the gap between the evil that is out there, and the values of our nation and our way of life. You are all volunteers – all of you – and our Country has put the security of our nation on your backs again and again, and you consider it a privilege to do your duty each and every time.

Many in America do not understand the incredible value and worth of this treasure, but that is OK – because this humble, yet competent generation, would want it no other way.

History will gloriously record what you have accomplished for not only our country, but also for the men and women of the free world, who thirst for democracy, and repulse extremism, violence, and exclusion – and seek moderation, tolerance, and inclusion for all human beings.

You are the men and women who believe in the power of our Nation’s values and civilization, exemplified by the promise of America. You are the ones who confront the menace of extremism and terrorism. And you are the ones who seek to expand opportunity and decency for all who thirst for it.

Few Soldiers in our history have faced a greater challenge. But in this challenge, you reflect the very best in our Army and our nation. You have been called – and have answered—as have generations who have gone before you. As the Prophet Isaiah once said, “Here am I, Send Me”. And you respond every time.

All I can say is that I admire you, and respect you – as well as each and every member of your families, and it is an honor and privilege for an old guy like me to stand shoulder to shoulder with each and every one of you today.

I am well aware of the great gift that has been given to me today. Command is always a privilege. Command in time of war is a distinct honor. I am excited to be joining the Combined Arms Center at a time when it is serving as one of the most important catalysis of change for our Army. This fine organization is recognized throughout the force as the “Intellectual Center of the Army”. The intellectual energy of this great team will continue to be called upon to shape the future of our Army.

Our priorities have been given to us and it is clear guidance. Our success will be measured by how well we implement the latest doctrine and strategies in CAC and across TRADOC schools and centers. We will do this by first implementing the Army Leader Development Strategy. It is job #1 and the area in which we must succeed over everything else. Second we will establish the Mission Command Center of Excellence in order to fill a significant gap in our ability to integrate Mission Command within and among all the War Fighting Functions. And third, we will ensure the most current doctrine is being taught in the most effective manner in our classrooms and training areas.

We will also continue to do what we have done best for so many years ...

- To educate and develop our leaders
- Help develop our Army’s doctrine,
- Oversee major collective training,
- Collect lessons from that training and from ongoing combat operations, and in turn,
- Feed those lessons back into the process of shaping the future.

This is a very powerful combination that makes CAC a vital part of our Army in the imperative to refine our Army's systems and processes to support an Army that deploys often and routinely – an Army that has truly become an expeditionary Army. It is evident that CAC and our Army must continue to change in response and adapt to the future. I look forward to being part of this effort to ensure CAC supports the development of a relevant and ready ground force to support joint, interagency and multinational operations anywhere in the world.

As I close, let me say that the freedoms and privileges that Americans enjoy today are a direct result of those who have sacrificed to defend their country. To those in uniform and your families – you have all served your Country with honor. You have done your part to preserve the values and greatness of our nation and the people of America. And the fact that you are here – learning and studying your profession – knowing you will again be called to defend our nation in a far distant land – says volumes about who you are and the values you – and your Family – stand for.

As our Commander in Chief said of each of you and your generation...

“Long after they are laid to rest – when the fighting has finished, and our nation has endured; when today's service men and women are veterans, and their children have grown – it will be said that this generation believed under the most trying of tests; They believed in perseverance – not just when it was easy, but when it was hard, that they paid the price and bore the burden to secure this nation, and stood up for the values that live in the hearts of all free peoples”.

Again, to all our guests – thank you very much for coming today. We are honored that you are here.

God bless you all;

God bless our great Troops and their families;

God bless our Army;

And my God bless the United States of America.

Thank you very much.

Army Strong!