

8 September 1969

Dear Charlie,

Many thanks for your gracious hospitality. I have never enjoyed a one-night stand more than my stay at Ft. Sill.

I especially want to thank you and members of your staff for the Ancient Order of Saint Barbara Certificate, the Saint Barbara Medal and the Centennial Coin. These and all other mementos are deeply appreciated.

Charlie, you certainly have a going concern at Ft. Sill. I told Barbara when I returned that this was the first time in my career that I had ever visited a military post and upon departing I had a feeling that everything--and I do mean everything--was under complete control.

The fact that I saw Red most of the time I was there contributed immeasurably to making the visit a delightful experience.

In a separate note to Larry I gave him full credit for starting off the visit with a bang by rolling out a red carpet.

For [unclear] 38 [unclear]

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I am dispatching a picture to you in another envelope for the Cherokee House. My selection was based on stressing the field in field artilleryman.

Again, many thanks for everything.

Most sincerely,

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Final
Draft.

PRESENTATION TO FIELD ARTILLERY OFFICERS ADVANCED COURSE
FIELD ARTILLERY SCHOOL, FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA - 5 SEP 69

I am delighted, indeed, to be here this morning to participate with you in this commencement exercise.

A question which a member of the audience might ask at this point is "Why is he glad to be here?" My answer, first and foremost, is that I am basically an artilleryman and I like to associate with artillerymen.

Another reason is that Ft. Sill was my very first duty station. I moved to Oklahoma back in June of 1942 with a brand new bride and after I settled her in Lawton I reported for my first duty with troops to a battery in the Field Artillery Training Center. I reported in full dress uniform, complete with Sam Brown belt, sabre chain, pink breeches, boots and spurs. Nothing will ever match the excitement of that first day of duty at Ft. Sill--nor the colorful language of battery First Sergeant when he saw me walk into the orderly room.

Each time I return, I am tremendously impressed with the improvements in the facilities and in the numerous activities that are taking place. You certainly have one of the finest military institutions in the world--it's good to be back.

Now that I have established my reason for wanting to be here, let me raise the question that first crossed my mind when I thought about what I might talk with you about. Graduation time is a time to reflect on your accomplishments, to take stock of where you are and to consider what you will face in the years ahead. With this in mind, I mentally reviewed all of the graduation exercises that I have attended; I realized that while I could well remember all of the speakers and whether or not I enjoyed their presentations, I found it most difficult to recall what

they had to say. Then I had an inspiration for my presentation to you this morning. I decided that I would review the comments and the advice that I remember being given to officers at graduations and similar exercises, and select a few of the most promising or most interesting ones to discuss with you this morning.

I would like to start out with a few ideas that General Maxwell Taylor habitually tried to get across to officers early in their careers. He said that every officer ought to purchase a tennis racket, a reading lamp, and an easy chair, and to make them a permanent part of the equipment that he would take with him wherever he was assigned. It really doesn't have to be a tennis racket, the point that General Taylor was interested in was that each and every one of us should take the time to participate in some sport or exercise on a regularly scheduled basis in order to keep ourselves physically fit.

The point that General Taylor made with the reading lamp and easy chair was that every officer, when he has finished his day's work, should have a comfortable place in which to sit down to read, to study, and to keep up to date on current events.

Keeping physically fit and up to date on current events is even more appropriate today if we are to meet the ever-increasing complex challenges that face today's professional soldier.

In the summer of 1942, a speaker at the graduation exercise for one of the short refresher courses developed a very interesting thesis: the advantages of being an artilleryman from the standpoint of an ambitious officer. The points he developed were these:

An artilleryman as a member of a field artillery battalion in direct support has a wonderful opportunity to learn infantry tactics and

battlefield management. His view is much like that of the brigade commander, whereas an officer assigned to an infantry battalion gains a much narrower appreciation of the tactical situation.

An artilleryman must have a superb understanding of the importance of communication and ammunition resupply problems under a variety of circumstances.

A good artilleryman is perfectly at home with figures--mathematics--which give him a solid basis for developing logical problem-solving techniques. These attributes, coupled with an intense desire to accomplish any assigned mission gives the edge to competent artillerymen over his contemporaries in other branches. So your potential for high level staff and command is virtually unlimited.

As a follow-on to this point, I remember that a speaker at the CGSC during a graduation exercise, for an associate course, went into considerable detail on the subject of how to become a general officer. While this is an interesting topic for any graduate, I want to make it clear that I don't recommend that this become your primary objective in life--rather, I would suggest that your objective should be to tackle every assigned task with an all-out effort in order to turn in the very best performance that you are capable of producing.

Incidentally, this by itself is an excellent way to achieve the first objective. But to get back to the points raised by this particular speaker: he strongly advocated that each officer seek difficult, challenging assignments--preferably in combat or in remote areas of the world. Or, stated another way: Go to the sound of the guns--go where the action is. Also, in addition to maintaining branch proficiency, he suggested that each officer take up a specialty--like aviation, financial management, or

logistics. He stressed--and I would underscore--don't let your efforts to develop a special talent detract in any way from your maintaining branch proficiency.

I recall another presentation made to a group of officers early in World War II at a graduation exercise at the Tank Destroyer School that was most interesting. The speaker was a Congressional Medal of Honor winner and a well-known leader of men. During the reception that followed his presentation, one of the officers asked him this question: "What went through your mind as you decided to do what you did to win the Medal of Honor?" His reply was most interesting. He said that he was very apprehensive about going into combat and had given it a great deal of thought. He made it a practice whenever he was out on a field problem or going through a tactical exercise of any type to mentally visualize the worst possible thing that could happen to his unit, and then he would formulate in his mind courses of action which, if executed properly, would get his unit out of the jam. He went on to say that when he found himself on the battlefield one day and one of these situations he had visualized came to life, he merely did what he had mentally planned to do many years before. Now this is an interesting approach to solving complex problems either on the battlefield or, I submit, to a high level staff crisis--It is one way to develop a reputation for being "unflappable."

For many years we have had what we call the Kermit Roosevelt Exchange Program with the United Kingdom. Under this program, we send selected senior officers over to lecture at the British service schools and they in turn send a British officer to lecture at our service schools. Several years ago one of these British officers was Sir Richard Gale, and the subject he selected was leadership, which is always a difficult one even

for some of our most distinguished military leaders. One of the points he stressed throughout his presentation was the fact that a leader must have a sense of humor, particularly if he hoped to get through trying times.

The thing that was interesting about this point came up during the question period when a member of the class stood up and asked Sir Richard if he would give an actual example of how a sense of humor had helped him in real life on the battlefield. Well, this took Sir Richard by surprise, but after a slight pause he told this story which I remember very vividly. It took place during the evacuation of the British forces from the continent of Europe in the early days of World War II. In the final retreat out of France, the British had two corps involved, one of which was commanded by Field Marshal Montgomery and the other by Sir Richard Gale. Sir Richard Gale told the story about how in the gloomy days of that withdrawal out of France he had to meet with three of his division commanders at a crossroad in order to sort out a sticky tactical situation. When he arrived at the crossroad his three division commanders were there waiting for him. You have to bear in mind that they had had a series of very difficult battles, had taken quite heavy losses, and all of them had been involved in combat for a prolonged period of time with little or no rest--and there was no relief in sight. As Sir Richard Gale approached the group, he noticed how drawn, unshaven,^{and} bleary-eyed they were, and the fact that they were all down in the mouth. So as he approached them he tried to display a rather gay outlook in an effort to cheer them up, and commented after they exchanged salutes "Cheer up, laddies, things could be worse." The only reaction he had was that one of the division commanders looked him right in the eye and said, "How?" Sir Richard Gale said that this rocked him back on his heels for a moment, and then he came back with the snappy

reply--"Well, it could rain,"--and by God it did. Needless to say, Sir Richard Gale got across his point about the importance of a sense of humor, and went on with the story to say that when it started to rain all three division commanders caught the spirit of his remark, had a good laugh, and despite the worst of everything, they all came out quite well. So I would encourage you to cultivate a sense of humor and to have it with you at all times, particularly when the going is rough.

When I graduated from the Advanced Class, Mark Clark was the guest speaker. He was a very impressive individual. But the only point that he made that I recall was this: "The United States always goes to war with the weapons left over from the last war." Now, that's a very interesting thought and I believe we should all dedicate ourselves to ensuring that if we have to go to war, we do so with the best possible equipment.

The last point I would like to make this morning is one that the Chief of Staff, raises at many graduation exercises and which I consider well worth remembering. He makes his point by telling about a letter he had received from an anxious mother who wrote about how she had sent her son off to Vietnam and how proud she was of her son. She said that the thing she had given her son to take away with him was something she had learned from her father a long time ago and she felt the same thought could be passed on to all of our men in the Army. Here is the thought:

A vision without a task, is a dream;

A task without a vision, is a drudgery;

But a vision and a task, are the hope of the world.

Now that you have graduated from the Field Artillery Advanced Course, I am sure you won't forget your task--don't lose your vision. You are the pride of the Army--You are the hope of the Free World.

I congratulate each of you and, to each and every one of you, I extend my very best wishes for continued success and happiness.