

COMMANDING GENERAL'S COMMENTS

UP-ARMOR YOURSELF W

March was Women's History month, and I had the honor of speaking at several events in Germany and in the United States. As I was preparing my remarks, I spent a lot of time thinking about what I would say. I wondered; what would be an appropriate message?

What I've discovered as I have reflected on my own life is, *the more responsibility I am given, the more I depend on Personal Courage to lead and serve.* And, as I have reflected, I have assessed those times where Personal Courage had been needed, and when I used it, and when, perhaps, I should have, but did not.

In my speeches, I focused on four great women who, for me, personify Personal Courage. I referred to Rosa Parks and her Personal Courage in standing up to discrimination; Eleanor Roosevelt and her Personal Courage in facing fierce opposition to her involvement in righting social wrongs; Amelia Earhart and the Personal Courage she

showed in taking on seemingly impossible tasks – and taking on stereotypes about women; and Corrie ten Boom, who risked her life saving Jews from the Nazi regime.

Personal Courage takes us out of our comfort zone. Ultimately, it is our gut, our values, our human instinct for right and wrong which tells us when we should take a stand, take action. Please, please, do not ignore your instinct for doing what is right. We must all get out of our comfort zone, show Personal Courage and make a difference. If we do NOT, we may miss our "Rosa Parks" moment in history."

Would I have possessed the Personal Courage to act on my convictions like Corrie ten Boom? And, if not, what is missing in my life that she possessed to be able to do so?

Perhaps, these women were "up-armored" with a different level of Personal Courage than you or me. We have all read in the papers and seen on the news recently the importance of "up-armor" our military vehicles to provide a higher level of force protection for our Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Well, what about our character, our person? What are we doing to "up-armor" ourselves? Our Soldiers? Our families? Mentally, emotionally, and spiritually?* Are we "up-armor" ourselves to be prepared to deal with death, tragedy, fear, harsh living conditions and, perhaps, even with directly dealing with the enemy – either because we have captured them or they have captured us?

Her life, her actions, encourage me to "up-armor" myself with my faith and with the Army values that are etched on the dog-tags I drape over my head each and every day. Every Soldier should have these values, that we must LIVE by, etched in their heart: *Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage!*

If I make the analogy that I represent a piece of equipment, then

Commanding General

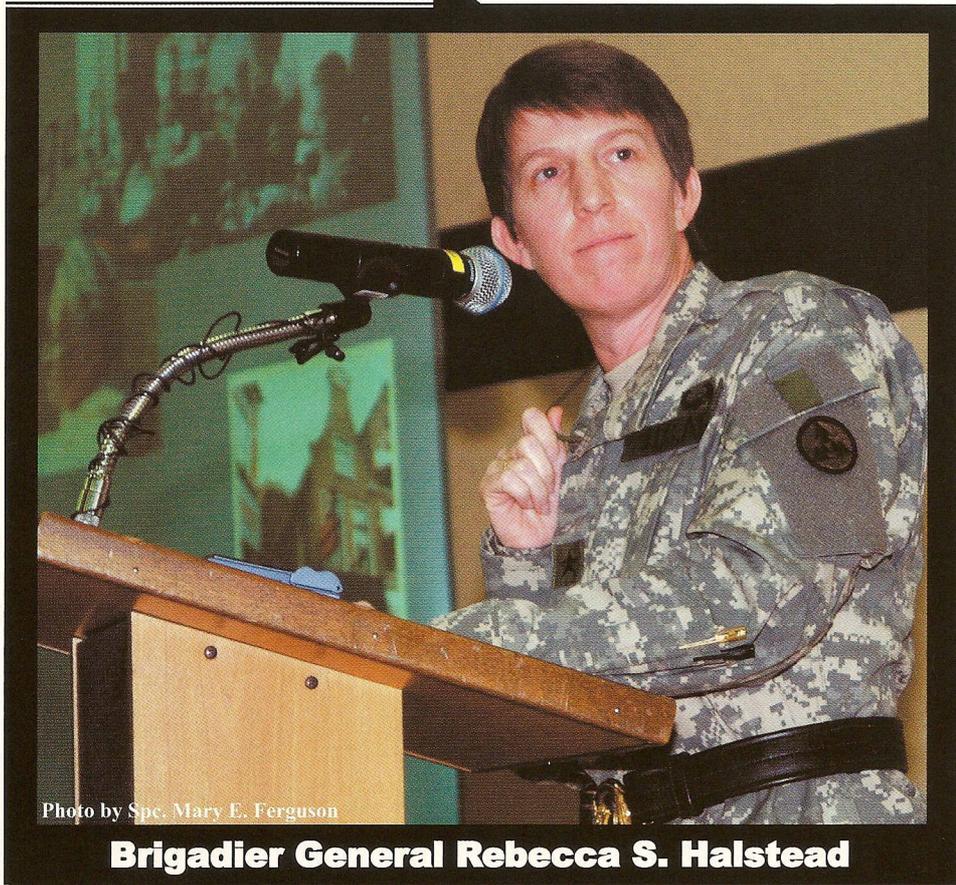


Photo by Spc. Mary E. Ferguson

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WITH PERSONAL COURAGE

as a child I would tell you that my parents began to “up-armor” or “harden” me by encouraging me not to be afraid, to stand up for what I believe in, to pursue my dreams, and to never quit. *During times of anxiousness, failure and uncertainty, I felt “discouraged” but through the counsel, strength, and love that my parents always provided, I was “encouraged.”* And, in doing so, I believe they taught me how to encourage others.

I like this concept of “encourager.” I think to encourage means to instill or inspire courage in someone else. As a leader during a time of war, this is hugely important. As I have encouraged Soldiers, I have seen first-hand that Soldiers of all ranks, male and female, and from all backgrounds possess Personal Courage. *As an Army at War, we see examples of incredible Personal Courage every day.*

It is hard to find an environment which demands more Personal Courage than being in combat or in an area where combat is likely. Logistics Soldiers and civilian employees, including about 1,000 3rd COSCOM Soldiers right now, and the rest of 3rd COSCOM in the near future, face potential combat every day - like all Soldiers and civilians who are deployed to the Central Command area of operations. Many have been attacked while on the road or even in their base camps. Some have been wounded and, sadly, some have

made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Soldiers are not the only ones who display Personal Courage. *For every Soldier, there are family members and friends and entire communities who make their own kind of sacrifices which require Personal Courage to be able to fulfill.* They wait, and hope, and pray each time their Soldier goes off to training or deploys for war, that they will safely return - always knowing the reality they may not.

My hope for each of us is that the lives of women like Rosa Parks, Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart and Corrie ten Boom, and the Personal Courage they possessed will encourage each of us to look deep inside ourselves, and prepare ourselves, “up-armor” ourselves with the Personal Courage we need to face whatever challenges are presented to us. *May we not miss that moment when we have the opportunity to make a difference in someone else’s life, or perhaps even greater, that moment in history when we have the chance to spark the fires of change for America, and for our world!*

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