<u>JUDICIAL CONFERENCE, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces</u>
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Good afternoon, and thanks to Chief Judge Effron for inviting me to be with you today. One of the first stories I worked on as a newspaper reporter when I moved from Kansas City to Washington in the summer of 1981, was a case that came before the U.S. Court of Military Appeals, as it was then called. It involved an Air Force second lieutenant named Christopher M. Cooke, who was deputy commander of a Titan II missile crew at McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas. Cooke was a confused, disaffected, unpleasant young man who, beginning in Dec. 1980, attempted to pass highly classified information to the Soviet embassy on 16th Street. He was paid $50 for the first batch, but proved as clumsy as he was treasonous, and was arrested in May 1981. He requested legal counsel and immunity; Air Force prosecutors, believing he was part of a larger espionage ring, orally offered him immunity in exchange for full disclosure. The Air Force subsequently concluded that he ought to be court-martialed anyway. His lawyers, F. Lee Bailey among them, challenged that change of heart before the Court of Military Appeals; as I recall, the commander of Strategic Air Command was among the witnesses who testified in Aug. 1981 at the courthouse on E Street. The court subsequently ruled, 2-to-1, that prosecution of Lt. Cooke would constitute a violation of due process because de facto immunity *had* been tendered. He was ordered released, subsequently resigned his commission, and slithered away. As a layman listening to the evidence, it seemed to me that justice was done in your court.

I make my living these days mostly as a historian; I'm writing a three-volume history of the role of the American military in the liberation of Europe in World War II. But for more than two decades I made my living as a journalist, mostly for the *Washington Post;* in Iraq, Bosnia, Somalia, and Iraq again, including two months embedded in the 101st Airborne Division for 2003 invasion, at the elbow of then Maj. Gen. Dave Petraeus, all day, every day. It's as both a historian and as a journalist—a *recovering* journalist—that I'd like to speak today for a bit, and then we'll open it to questions and hopefully have a conversation. Having been a hack for more than twenty years I have few illusions about the virtues of the breed. I confess to being routinely disheartened by a journalism profession that is often rude, shallow, slipshod, arrogant, more enamored of celebrity than wisdom, fatuous, lazy—*please!* Stop me if you disagree!

I know that many in this room are serious students of history, and I suspect you feel as I do that history has many uses. It can be *comforting*, because if you read enough history you know that whatever trials and travails you're going through, others have gone through worse. That's my reaction to reading David McCullough's *1776* or Doris Kearns Goodwin's group portrait of Abraham Lincoln and his Cabinet, *Team of Rivals.*

History can also be inspiring, **uplifting**. We could do worse in our professional and personal lives than to use someone like George C. Marshall as a role model, a pole star, and, when confronted by a thorny dilemma, to ask ourselves, "What would Marshall

do?" **But**: I live with that World War II generation every day, I read their diaries, their letters to their wives, their OERs. There's a tendency to conflate them into a single, featureless demi-god, possessed of mythical courage, wisdom, and fortitude. They've been described as "a gentle obsolescent breed of heroes…Unicorns, almost." Oh, *please.* They had *enormous* feet of clay. I feel that I also know the current breed of soldier pretty well, from private to 4-star, and they are every bit the equal of that absurdly misnamed Greatest Generation, and in many ways much better prepared for the challenges at hand. So history can be inspiring, but, again, it can also be reassuring, because clear-eyed comparisons between then and now are *not* disheartening.

History can be cautionary. You cannot have read much Mesopotamian history and felt entirely sanguine about invading Iraq. I quite frankly have wondered what the President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, the joint chiefs, Gen. Franks, and others *had* read, besides faulty intelligence.

History can be chastening. Professional military officers, as part of their schooling, spent a good deal of time pondering how armies from their combat experience. Another way to look at this is how do armies *forget*. In September 2003, I had a conversation with a four-star whom I admire and who had significant responsibility for preparations prior to the invasion of Iraq six months earlier, including providing some of the phase IV resources to used after major combat operations ended. And he commented on how this nation-building stuff—especially nation-building in combat--was kind of a brave new world, requiring innovation and imagination. I said, "Do you know that in the Army's Green Series"—the 114-volume official history of World War II—"there's a book called *Soldiers Become Governors*?" It details our experience in "phase IV" operations from Sicily to Bavaria. And in the National Archives and at the Military History Institute at Carlisle there are thousands of pages of documents used to write that volume—after action reports, personal memoirs, and so forth. He said: "I did not know that."

Maybe he didn't need to know that, and perhaps others in the planning process diligently studied those historical antecedents. But I think it's useful for senior officers to have an adhesive historical memory. In Sicily in the summer of 1943, for example, the occupation force faced: rampant looting; a destroyed infrastructure; a population traumatized by decades of authoritarian rule; civil authorities and institutions tainted by loyalty to a corrupt, brutal regime; rampant score-settling; starvation; disease, and so forth. The U.S. and British armies made many mistakes; Sicily is *not* a good model. (When Patton was asked to make room in 7th Army's invasion force for civil affairs units, he replied, "Why should I take along those sissies?") But they learned a lot, and they made heroic efforts to adapt those lessons to Italy and beyond. That was an army that learned in combat, and I suppose the question is whether its later incarnations forgot what that army had learned.

Let's focus on one particular aspect of warfighting, past and present, and I'll offer several field problems for your consideration, both historical and more contemporary. That aspect is: media operations. If you're a military attorney, or a judge,

this issue may seem far afield from your daily cares; yet it goes to the heart of how the nation feels about the military and how we make judgments about what our military is doing, since those perceptions are shaped by and filtered through the media.

Many military officers have long realized that the media is an inescapable part of the job, and the greater the responsibility the more inescapable the media becomes. Let's not sugar-coat it: it's a mistake to force a round peg into a square hole, to assert that journalists and soldiers are bound by some common goal, or a common patriotism, or some other commonality of interest.

The truth is that what soldiers do is very different from what journalists do. An Army officer, for example, is driven by a desire to achieve the mission and take care of his troops. A reporter is driven by a desire to achieve his or her mission—which is what? To sell newspapers or boost ratings, right? No, not really. That is simply not how working hacks think. Rather, *it is to bear witness*, which in its highest form means providing citizens of the community and the country with the information required to make sensible civic decisions. There's no denying that many of us have an anti-authoritarian streak; that the profession attracts iconoclasts; and that journalism tends to be—unlike the military—very un-hierarchical. Moreover, there's a crusading impulse in many newsrooms—an impulse to expose injustice, corruption, and exploitation of the weak, an impulse to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

Some, but not all, senior military officers have come to the realization that if you are a senior officer who hides from the press; if you are an officer who contends that there is no legitimate role in a political democracy for the media in covering military operations; if you believe, when deployed, that it's *not* necessary to employ the media as a conduit to the families back home who are wondering what their soldiers are doing—well, then you are in danger of failing as a 21st century officer, failing personally and failing the troops you're privileged to lead.

I think the consequences can be significant: a couple years ago there was an extensive Gallup Poll conducted for the McCormick Tribune Foundation, which among other things runs the 1st Division Museum outside Chicago. The poll found that more Americans are interested in national security issues than they were before 9/11, *not* surprisingly. It found that only **61 percent** of Americans believe the news media keeps them well informed on military and national security issues; that was down from 79 percent in 1999. The same poll found that only **54 percent** of Americans feel the *military* keeps them well informed; that was down from 77 percent in 1999. **Sixty percent** felt they didn't have enough information about military matters to make educated decisions; and **more than three-quarters** of Americans believe the military sometimes provides false or inaccurate information. I would guess that Abu Ghraib, the Pat Tillman debacle, and Walter Reed have not improved that statistic.

This is troubling. For the media, there are commercial consequences: if the public doesn't feel the news media is giving them what they need, they'll spend their

nickel somewhere else. The current bleak financial plight of American newspapers and magazines is now well-documented.

But for the military, **the consequences are more dire than commercial loss**. First of all, if only six in 10 believe they're well-informed enough to make educated decisions, chances are the public is going to make some *bad* national security and military decisions. *Maybe they already have.* Second, it's *their* Army. They are the shareholders *and* the board of directors. If only half of them think the military is keeping them informed about the most vital issues facing our country, and if three-quarters of them think they're being fed phony or misleading information, how long do you think they're going to continue to support, trust, and underwrite the military?

The most senior officers today, the Dave Petraeuses, have had an entire professional lifetime in which the media has been part of the landscape. Even for those a generation older, say for officers who came into the Army at the beginning of the Vietnam era, the military-media relationship has always been part of officership, sometimes a contentious part. But if you were a field grade officer in, say, 1942, you had *no* history like that, no questions about reporters on the battlefield, or in your command post. Sure, the press had been around for a hundred years or more; the first professional war correspondents emerged in the Crimean War. There had even been instances of embedding: a reporter named Mark Kellogg had the misfortune of persuading George Custer to let him embed with the 7th Cavalry in 1876. Kellogg did *not* live to tell the tale.

However, it's really in World War II that the modern military-media relationship begins because of the convergence of modern communications; a mass and literate audience; the emergence of radio; and the War Department's recognition that the media was a useful conduit of information from battlefield to homefront, *and* a useful counter against an adversary exceptionally skilled at propoganda.

Here I think history can be *instructive*. It's never predictive, and rarely provides a blueprint for contemporaneous action, but the experiences, the hard-earned wisdom of our predecessors can be useful. In 1942 you could easily have spent 25 years in the Army and never *seen* a reporter, much less had the little bastards living with you. To the extent those senior officers had an opinion on the subject it was probably best articulated by Admiral Ernest J. King, chief of naval operations in World War II. (Roosevelt described King as an "irascible old crustacean who shaves with a blow torch".) King said that the press should be given only two pieces of information during all of World War II: they should be notified *when* the war was over, and they should be told *who won*.

Yet most of those commanders, including King, quickly realized that such an attitude simply wouldn't wash. Of that generation, one of the wisest men was the British field marshal, William Slim who made this observation: "Publicity is with us and it is here to stay. It is necessary, and a *good general uses it for his own purposes.*" Slim was in fact stealing a page from one of his British predecessors, a man with a pretty good

military track record in the Middle East, T.E. Lawrence, of Arabia, who said, "The printing press is the greatest weapon in the armory of the modern commander."

Well, hold Admiral King's proposal for a moment, and the observations by Slim and Lawrence, and let's go to our first field problem. **Field problem #1:** you're Dwight D. Eisenhower, you're the theater commander in North Africa in the spring of 1943, and you are concerned because as the campaign in Tunisia comes to a close there's a great deal of speculation, some of it in barrooms, some of it in the newspapers, about where the Allied armies will strike next. You of course are planning to attack Sicily on July 10, with nearly eight assault divisions. Some of the speculation has posited Sicily—it's a pretty obvious next step after Africa. What do you do?

Here's what Eisenhower did: he summoned all of the accredited reporters in Algiers to his headquarters in the Hôtel St. George, at 1530 hours on June 12, 1943, where he explicitly declared the briefing to be secret and off-the-record. Then he unveiled a map of Sicily, showed them where 7th Army and 8th Army would land, gave them the invasion date, which was still a month away, and reminded them again not to tell anybody. He concluded *that* was the best way to curb speculation in the press—and he was right. He also believed the reporters would keep quiet—he was right again—and he had concluded that they would now feel *vested* in the operation, which also suited his purposes.

Later one of the reporters said to him, "Don't *ever* do that to us again." But in fact reporters were read into many operations. Mark Clark, for example, laid out for reporters the entire DIADEM plan for the breakout from Anzio and the attack on Rome. Eisenhower told Beetle Smith, his chief of staff, "Tell them nothing sometimes, but *never* deliberately mislead them." He eventually concluded, believe it or not, that reporters were "entitled to the same confidence as the members of my staff." Why? Because Eisenhower came to the conclusion, in his words, that "in the last analysis, public opinion wins wars."

Field Problem #2: Come to the other side of the fence. You are Demaree Bess, a correspondent for the *Saturday Evening Post.* In August 1943, you get wind of a nasty episode—two episodes, as you discover—involving the 7th Army commander, Lt. Gen. Patton, who has slapped and seriously abused a pair of soldiers in two field hospitals. You quickly put together extensive details, which is easy because the doctors and nurses are so pissed off they tell you everything. General Patton, perhaps the most celebrated and aggressive field commander in the U.S. Army, has clearly committed offenses which could, perhaps should lead to a court-martial. What do you do?

Here's what Bess did. Along with two other reporters who also were onto the story, he contacted Eisenhower's office and the reporters were summoned to Algiers by Eisenhower, who by this time had received an account of the incidents from his surgeon general. Bess said, "We're Americans first and reporters second." Eisenhower did not explicitly ask them to kill the story, but they were impressed by his sincerity and his clear quandary over what to do about Patton. The reporters kept silent, and so did sixty others

in North Africa and Sicily, American and British. The story was eventually broken three months later in the U.S. by columnist Drew Pearson.

Could that happen today? Would reporters ignore a story like that? I don't know. Should they? Do you want your general officers physically assaulting your soldiers? Certainly it would be the rare reporter who would open the conversation by saying "I'm an American first and a reporter second"; but then who among you in the military has said, "I'm an American first and an officer second?" It's a false choice. Certainly there are many, many occasions when journalists keep information out of the newspapers or off their airwaves and Internet. Sometimes it's big stuff, including major national security information; sometimes, as in the case a couple years ago of the *New York Times* and warrantless government eavesdropping on American citizens, they keep it out of the paper for a year and then decide to print it.

The point here with Demaree Bess, as with Eisenhower and the HUSKY plan, is that there's a presumption of a relationship, a dialogue, and that a key component of that relationship is trust.

Field problem #3, last of our historical problems. You're Lieutenant General Omar Nelson Bradley, commander of II Corps. You've just invaded Sicily. Almost no one in America knows who you are, despite your 32 years in the Army, and you like it that way *just fine*. Your aide, Chet Hansen, comes to you one evening and says there's a newspaper reporter who wants to follow you around for a few days. You tell him that you long ago learned to "hold my tongue and keep my name out of the papers." Hansen, the aide, says to you: "How many men do you have in the corps?" You say, "About 80,000." Hansen says, "For those 80,000 troops you've got better than a quarter-million fathers, mothers, wives, and what-have-you in the United States…a good many of them are probably asking themselves: What sort of guy is this Omar Bradley? Is he good enough to take care of my man?"

What do you do? Here's how Bradley explains what *he* did: "For three days Ernie Pyle and I were inseparable. We ate breakfast together in the morning on powdered eggs and soybean cereal. After the staff briefing we hung dust goggles around our necks and headed off to see the divisions…And in the evenings we cut the dust from our throats with a jigger of Scotch." So much for General Order #1.

By the way, Pyle wrote six columns that featured Bradley and gave birth to the "soldier's general" myth. Good as he was, Pyle never really got inside Bradley, who was much more nuanced, conniving, and complex. But the point is that Bradley came to the conclusion that, as Field Marshal Slim said, *publicity was here to stay* and that a good general must use it for his own purposes.

And what's that purpose? Self-aggrandizement? Sometimes. Look at Mark Clark: almost fifty men on his public relations staff in Italy in 1944; each press release was supposed to mention "Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark's Fifth Army" at least three times on the first page," and he preferred to be photographed on his left side because he considered

it his "facially better side." But more often there are larger purposes, institutional purposes, warfighting purposes. Remember Admiral Ernie King, who doesn't want to tell reporters *anything* except that the war is over? King concluded that that policy was serving his Navy poorly. During the war he ended up holding a series of 16 detailed background briefing sessions about naval strategy with reporters at his house in Alexandria, Virginia, usually for three to four hours at a clip, during which King, invariably, would drink five glasses of beer, get up to pee, have a final glass of beer, then bid everyone goodnight. I have to believe that press coverage of U.S. naval strategy grew more sophisticated.

There are many similar examples. Lucian Truscott—among the best field commanders our Army produced in the 20th century—writes to his wife Sarah on Aug. 25, 1943, after Sicily and before Salerno, when he commands the 3rd Infantry Division: "I've had to overcome my antipathy for reporters…They are OK when you know them. I have come to admire a number of them very much." A few days later he writes Sarah and tells her that he has advised the reporters "to tell the story as they saw it, without fear or favor, that so far as I was concerned this division had nothing to hide, and *even if we did the future of America depends upon informed public opinion."*

George Marshall became convinced that "the best way to keep a secret out of the newspapers was to reveal it to responsible newsmen and then explain why it couldn't be printed." Beetle Smith, Eisenhower's chief of staff, who like Truscott had no love for reporters—but then, he had no love for anybody—held a weekly background briefing session with the press, "at which I speak very frankly and at which I outline future operations and take the selected members of the press into complete confidence." Why? Because Smith said, "A modern commander fights on two fronts. He fights the enemy on one side and he fights his government and his public on the other side. One battle, the first, is intermitent; the second one is continuous."

And of course that implies a responsibility beyond combat operations. Military officers may not like it, but institutionally they're fighting budget battles, and it will ever be thus. In Sept. 1944, Hap Arnold, commanding general of the Army Air Forces, wrote an eyes-only letter to Lt. General Ira Eaker, who was the senior U.S. air commander in the Mediterranean: "Dear Ira, I am extremely concerned over current press releases stressing the remarkable achievements of ground force commanders such as [Mark] Clark and [Alexander] Patch, [the Seventh Army commander], in speeding the war to an early and successful end…Air operations, if mentioned at all in connection with our splendid advances, are generally described by brief references to the fact that air support to ground operations was given."

Arnold goes on about this for several paragraphs and says, "I consider the whole subject of realistic reorientation of the public's concept of the effect of air power upon the outcome of the war so important that I will scour the country to provide you with the men most capable of putting into words the achievements of the Army Air Forces." The Air Force has come a *long* way, hasn't it? And how about those Marines? Think they've learned something about cultivating press relations? Of course the real

agenda here, in Arnold's letter, is an independent Air Force; variations of a larger institutional "battle"—as Beetle Smith put it—continue to this day and are simply part of the 21st century landscape. Why do you think Gen. Petraeus seems to be in the media all the time? Because he's a press hound? No. It's not about him. (Okay, maybe a little.) It's because he knows he needs a megaphone to get his message out.

Again, consider George Marshall. He cultivated press relations as carefully as he cultivated congressional relations. Let me bluntly contrast that with Gen. Rick Shinseki, the former Army chief and now the VA secretary: great soldier, compelling personal story, a man of courage and competence, who nevertheless *ran* from the press and who simply did not consider it part of his responsibility as a 21st century chief of staff to cultivate press relations. He didn't do his Army any favors, and he didn't do himself any favors. Because when he took it in the neck from the secretary of defense and the deputy secdef, he had no friends in the Washington press corps, because no one knew who he was.

Let's look at a more contemporaneous conundrum:

Field Problem #4. You're Gen. Wayne Downing, then the commander of Special Operations Command, and in Dec. 1993, you get a call from a *Washington Post* reporter just back from several weeks in Mogadishu. He says he has spent many hours around the Bakara Market neighborhood, examining the wreckage of two downed Blackhawks and talking to survivors of the hellacious Oct. 3-4 firefight with Task Force Ranger, and that the Somalis have quite a story to tell about. Among other things, the Somalis claim that as the Rangers and Delta troops moved from the Olympia Hotel toward Crash Site 1, they secured a perimeter by occupying houses and flex-cuffing women and children. (From the Ranger perspective they were keeping civilians from running out into the firefight, from the Somali perspective the Americans took hostages). Another thing the reporter tells you is that the Somalis were much better organized than most people realized; they had an early warning system using cell phones, and the district militia commander for the Bakara Market was a man named Giumali who had been a colonel, an artilleryman, in the Somali army, and whose account suggested an impressively sophistical military operation.

What's a general to do? I'll tell you what Gen. Downing did, because I was the reporter. He said, "How can I help you?" I said, I really need to talk to the Rangers, to guys from the 160th, and to the Delta squadron. He said, "I'll make it happen." And he did, under ground rules that were mutually agreeable, including my promise not to disclose the names of the squadron commander or the other Delta troops with whom I spoke at Ft. Bragg. The end result was a 2-part, 10,000-word article in the *Post*, titled "The Night of a Thousand Casualties." Gen. Downing, rest his good soul, and the Army will have their own view, but I believe there was a consensus that the Army's story—which was intertwined with the Somali perspective--was told comprehensively and fairly, even if it wasn't pretty. Mark Bowden subsequently did his own reporting on the story and wrote a pretty darned good book called *Blackhawk Down*.

FIELD PROBLEM #5: I'm going to ask you to come to the other side of the fence again. It's 1990, and you're just another schmuck in a newsroom trying to figure out what's going to happen in Kuwait, which Saddam Hussein has overrun three weeks earlier. The new chief of staff of the Air Force, Gen. Michael J. Dugan, wants to know if you'd be interested in flying with him to Saudi Arabia for a week-long inspection trip. You and two other reporters report to Andrews Air Force base the day after Labor Day, and fly for 15 hours to Dhahran. There are seven Air Force generals on the plane. They're cordial during the flight, but not particularly talkative. For one thing, it's evident they don't know much. You get to Saudi Arabia, they go off for several days to secret places like Khamis Muschat, where the F-117s were based, and everyone rendezvous at the end of the week in Riyadh for the flight home. The generals take turns sitting down with the reporters. The chief of Air Force public affairs is aboard, and it's explicitly clear that the conversations are on the record.

The chief, Gen. Dugan, is ebullient. He's just spent a week confirming that his guys are ready to fight, and are capable of stopping Saddam should he venture farther south, into Saudi. Dugan talks and talks, with a tape recorder running. Later, after refueling in Spain, he comes back to add more detail about what the Israelis advise, about the deployment of Have Naps to Diego Garcia, about a strategic air concept that leaps over the fielded Iraqi forces. All of it is on the record, except for two minor points, which he wants to put on background. The reporters are fascinated and, frankly, puzzled. Why is he telling us this stuff? As the plane lands at Andrews at midnight on Friday night, one of the generals says, "You've made lifelong friends on this trip."

What's a reporter to do? I'll tell you what I did. I went into the office on Saturday morning and wrote a 3,000-word story. The lede was: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff have concluded that U.S. military air power, including a massive bombing campaign against Baghdad that specifically targets Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, is the only effective option to force Iraqi forces from Kuwait if war erupts, according to Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Michael J. Dugan." I then called the Air Force chief of public affairs at home and ready him every syllable of what I'd just written. When I finished, he said, "That's a great story." Roger that. The article appeared the next morning, a Sunday, under a banner headline on page 1: "U.S. to Rely on Air Strikes if War Erupts." And as some of you may recall, Gen. Dugan was summoned into Secretary Cheney's office on Monday and fired.

I'll try to avoid sanctimony about this episode. I'll also tell you that I felt terrible for what happened to Gen. Dugan, who was clearly a fine officer and a good man. But reporters have a duty, too, and in this case, now 17 years after the fact, I feel comfortable that I did my job.

FIELD PROBLEM #6, the last—You're Lt. Gen. William Scott Wallace, then the commander of V Corps, and on the afternoon of Thursday, March 27, 2003, about a week into the invasion of Iraq, you travel to Forward Operating Base Shell to confer with your division commander, Dave Petraeus, for an hour. Afterwards, two reporters—one from the *NY Times* and the other from the *Washington Post*—mosey up and ask you to analyze the Army's progress in what has been a difficult few days. You are the sort of guy, who when asked a direct question gives a direct answer. You tell the reporters that

you're appalled by the inhumanity of the enemy's brutal tactics, particularly in coercing non-combatants to fight, and that the Iraqi paramilitaries are fighting in ways that hadn't been fully anticipated during war-games. When asked if the war is likely to last longer than anticipated, you say, "It's beginning to look that way." You talk about a pause to consolidate logistics.

It takes a day or so but soon enough you learn that your comments have kicked up something of a fuss in Washington, where there are a lot of people running around with their hair on fire and are taking pains, through extraordinary verbal contortions, to insist that everything in Iraq is absolutely going precisely according to plan. It is suggested to you that perhaps lowering your profile and staying away from the press for a while might be a good idea.

What's a corps commander to do? Gen. Wallace obviously can speak for himself on this, and he has, but perhaps without appearing to be too self-serving, I can give you my sense of what he did—and *did not* do. He lowered his profile; he sidestepped ambush interviews; he declined—with a wonderfully wry smile—to publicly discuss certain aspects of the campaign in the coming days. (I should add that all of us in the field were surprised at the flap-doodle his comments caused). What he *didn't* do I thought was a mark of command authority and character. He didn't go to general quarters; he didn't dodge responsibility or try to shoot the messenger; he didn't warn his subordinates to stop talking to reporters or to limit their access; he didn't hide. He met virtually every day with Gen. Petraeus, sometimes more than once a day, often over the hood of a Humvee, and he didn't prohibit reporters—me in particular—from listening in on those conversations.

Let's go back in history one last time and examine another encounter between a journalist and an Army officer. It happened sixty-five years ago, in mid-December 1943, during the battle for San Pietro in central Italy, near Monte Cassino. It's *not* a happy story. The officer was Captain Henry T. Waskow. He was from Belton, Texas, born on a farm, and while he was a student at Trinity College he joined the Texas National Guard.

The Texas Guard was federalized and became the 36th Infantry Division, and Henry Waskow eventually became commander of Company B, in the 143rd Infantry. He survived Salerno, but on Dec. 14, 1943, while leading his company up Monte Sammucro, above San Pietro, he was killed by shellfire. His body lay on the mountain for several days until the company runner could get a mule from the valley below and bring Capt. Waskow down. At the foot of the mountain was, by chance, Ernie Pyle. Here's part of Pyle's account of that scene:

***I was at the foot of the mule trail* the night they brought Capt. Waskow's** body down. The moon was nearly full at the time, and you could see far up the trail, and even part way across the valley below. Soldiers made shadows in the moonlight as they walked. Dead men had been coming down the mountain all evening, lashed to the backs of mules. They came lying belly-down across the wooden pack saddles, their heads

hanging down on the left side of the mule, their stiffened legs sticking awkwardly from the other side, bobbing up and down as the mule walked.

The Italian mule-skinners were afraid to walk beside the dead men, so Americans had to lead the mules down that night. Even the Americans were reluctant to unlash and lift off the bodies at the bottom, so an officer had to do it himself, and ask others to help.

The first one came early in the morning. They slid him down from the mule and stood him on his feet for a moment, while they got a new grip. In the half light he might have been merely a sick man standing there, leaning on the others. Then they laid him on the ground in the shadow of the low stone wall alongside the road. **I don't know who that first one was**. You feel small in the presence of dead men, and ashamed at being alive, and you don't ask silly questions.

We left him there beside the road, that first one, and we all went back into the cowshed and sat on water cans or lay in the straw, waiting for the next batch of mules.

Somebody said the dead soldier had been dead for four days, and then nobody said anything more about it. We talked soldier talk for an hour or more. The dead men lay all alone outside in the shadow of the low stone wall.

Then a soldier came into the cowshed and said there were some more bodies outside. We went out into the road. Four mules stood there, in the moonlight, in the road where the trail came down off the mountain. The soldiers who led them stood there waiting. "This one is Captain Waskow," one of them said quietly.

Two men unlashed his body from the mule and lifted it off and laid it in the shadow beside the low stone wall. Other men took the other bodies off. Finally there were five lying end to end in a long row, alongside the road. You don't cover up dead men in the combat zone. They just lie there in the shadows until somebody else comes after them.

The unburdened mules moved off to their olive orchard. The men in the road seemed reluctant to leave. They stood around, and gradually one by one I could sense them moving close to Capt. Waskow's body. Not so much to look, I think, as to say something in finality to him, and to themselves. I stood close by and I could hear. **One soldier came and looked down**, and he said out loud, "God damn it." That's all he said, and then he walked away. Another one came. He said, "God damn it to hell anyway." He looked down for a few last moments, and then he turned and left.

Another man came; I think he was an officer. It was hard to tell officers from men in the half light, for all were bearded and grimy dirty. The man looked down into the dead captain's face, and then he spoke directly to him, as though he were alive. He said: "I sure am sorry, old man." **Then a soldier came and stood beside** the officer, and bent over, and he too spoke to his dead captain, not in a whisper but awfully tenderly, and he said: "I sure am sorry, sir."

Then the first man squatted down, and he reached down and took the dead hand, and he sat there for a full five minutes, holding the dead hand in his own and looking intently into the dead face, and he never uttered a sound all the time he sat there.

And finally he put the hand down, and then he reached up and gently straightened the points of the captain's shirt collar, and then he sort of rearranged the tattered edges of his uniform around the wound. And then he got up and walked away down the road in the moonlight, all alone.

After that the rest of us went back into the cowshed, leaving the five dead men lying in a line, end to end, in the shadow of the low stone wall. We lay down on the straw in the cowshed, and pretty soon we were all asleep….[end excerpt]

I would argue that without the journalist on the battlefield, Capt. Waskow would be just another KIA, all but anonymous. More important, without the journalist on the battlefield, all the things that Henry Waskow embodies—sacrifice, infantry hardship, small unit leadership, cameraderie, the extraordinary bond between leader and led—all those things would have been lost to the people at home who read Ernie Pyle's dispatch, and they would be lost to us.

Here's the bottom line, and we'll get on to your questions and comments. This is *our* military. It's not Barack Obama's military, any more than it was George Bush's. It's not Robert Gates's military, or even your military, but rather ours, collectively. We *are* co-proprietors. It's vital for Americans to believe that they've got a blood stake in the fate of the Army, to feel as if our own sons and daughters, brothers and sisters fill the ranks, even in an all-volunteer force, where it can be too easy to conclude, well, they volunteered to be there, it's not really my problem. The very best way to nurture that proprietary sense of investment, I believe, is to do whatever you can do to make Americans feel that they know the Army, that they live and die with the Army, that it's part of them. Part of that is having reporters essentially woven into your force structure. Can that be uncomfortable? Sure. Ask General Petraeus. Ask General Wallace.

The media plays an indispensible role in the dialogue of our democracy. Like good concrete, an enduring republic has reinforcing rods that give it strength and durability. A strong, responsive military is one of those critical rods, and so is a free, active, and independent press. And if you don't think it's essential to every robust democracy on earth, just name one that lacks a vigilant press. The fate of every soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine in the armed forces depends on what the American people decide, collectively, should be done with *our* Army, in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. You want those co-proprietors to be so well-informed that they become wise.

The relationship between the military and the larger Republic is the oldest institutional relationship in our country's history, and it's important for people to understand viscerally that the fate of our armed forces is our fate. You do not want *only* half of all Americans believing you're keeping them well-informed about what you're

doing; you sure don't want three-quarters of them believing that you're sometimes deceiving them.

George Washington once said that it's better to have an army of asses led by a lion than to have an army of lions led by an ass. *Anyone* who as spent time around our military today knows that we are fortunate enough in 2008 to have an army of lions led by lions. Thank you for asking me to be with you today.