

C O P Y

GENERAL OF THE ARMY

HENRY H. "HAP" ARNOLD

25 June 1886 - 15 Jan 1950

General of the Army Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, World War II air leader, almost single-handedly brought into being the largest and hardest hitting military air force the world had ever seen.

"His colleagues never considered him a brilliant strategist or an original military thinker", wrote Harold B. Hinton in the New York Times on the day of Arnold's death. "What they considered his principal capability at the historic moment when he had the opportunity to show it was a combination of sheer brute strength and avariciousness, shoving, pushing and single-mindedness to the point of pig-headedness".

Arnold's Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall was impressed by the younger man's tenacity. Without Marshall's backing, Arnold might have fought World War II as a relatively minor field commander in the Army Air Forces. Shortly after the war began, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Against the wishes of the Navy, General Marshall insisted that General Arnold be considered as a member and President Roosevelt supported him.

Arnold formed a "brain trust" to refine the planning needs he had to defend before the Joint Chiefs. With the backing and research of this group he brought into being the Twentieth Air Force as a strategic striking unit to be held under direct command of the Joint Chiefs for world wide deployment whenever needed. This was a unique concept at the time, but one that has influenced the organization of long-range air striking power to this day.

General Arnold spent two days a week after his retirement in 1946 in an office reserved for him at Hamilton Field, near San Francisco, handling a voluminous correspondence. He believed that the honors accorded him required this attention. The original autograph letter displayed here tells us that Arnold the man quite clearly practiced in his own life what he advised his young colleague to do.

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HAMILTON FIELD, CALIFORNIA  
Office of General of the Army H.H.Arnold

5 November 1947

In Reply Refer To:

Lt.Colonel LeRoy L. Stefen, A.C.,  
641 Circle Drive,  
Palo Alto, Calif.

Dear Colonel Stefen:

Your recent question has so many ramifications, I can suggest but a few of what appear to me to be the most generally important requisites for a successful military career. Here they are:

1. Basic knowledge. Exact, clear knowledge; not a hazy smattering. This kind of knowledge of the basics of your profession; of every assignment you are given, - this is your "technique"; this constitutes your "tools".

2. Hard work: unrelenting, hard work. Some persons have a natural capacity for it; others have to develop it. No outstanding success is ever achieved without it.

3. Vision.. The degree of vision depends, naturally, upon the quality of an individual's imagination; yet, one can train himself to look beyond his immediate assignment, to its relation to the next higher echelon of command, and the next, and the next, and, so on, to the highest level or overall sphere of activity of which he can envision its being a part. He can also, - if he has the capacity -, envision possibilities yet undeveloped: new horizons of activity. This is the kind of vision that begets enthusiasm; and enthusiasm is the eager, driving force that converts dreams into realities.

4. Judgment: not only the judgment that makes quick, correct decisions, but the ability to judge human nature, as well. Putting the right men in the right places, - this is an essential in building a strong, successful organization.

5. Articulateness. A comparatively overlooked factor, but, nevertheless, a most important one. Many an excellent idea is "stillborn" because its originator did not have the ability "to put it across". Public speaking courses are excellent aids to acquiring this faculty.

6. Properly adjusted human relationships. Naturally, this is largely a matter of personality: some persons just

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(Lt Colonel LeRoy L. Stefen, A.C., Cont.)

naturally get along with people; others, just as naturally, do not. But in the military sphere, if one is going "to get to first base", he must be able to handle men successfully. The study of psychology is undoubtedly a great practical help to those who find the matter of human relationships somewhat difficult; but I have also observed these things help: firmness, plus tolerance; sympathetic understanding of the little man's position and problems, as well as understanding of one's relation to the man at the top. Best of all, of course, is the practical application of the Golden Rule, - the simplest and the best code of ethics as yet devised.

7. Personal integrity. This covers a very wide field. To touch upon one or two, - it means, for example, maintaining the courage of one's convictions. By no means should this be confused with stubborn thinking. Stubborn thinking is as outmoded as the ox cart. Its exact opposite, resilient thinking, is Today's Must: a man must be able to accommodate his thinking quickly and accurately to his rapidly changing world; nevertheless, it must be his thinking, - not someone's else.

Personal integrity also means moral integrity. Regardless of what appear to be some superficial ideas of present-day conduct, fundamentally, - today as always -, the man who is genuinely respected is the man who keeps his moral integrity sound; who is trustworthy in every respect. To be successful, a man must trust others; and a man cannot trust others, who does not trust himself.

These are but a few thoughts. When it comes right down to "brass tacks", however, in the military field, as in all other fields, it would seem to be a man's native ability that spells the difference between failure and mediocrity; between mediocrity and success. Two men may work equally hard toward a common goal; one will have just that "something" the other lacks, that puts him at the top. This is the intangible, - the spirit of a man.

With very best wishes for your success,

Sincerely yours,

/signed/  
H.H. ARNOLD,  
General of the Army.

\*This letter typed from signed original; no punctuation or grammar changed.

