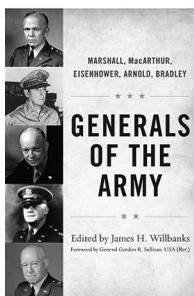


to private security organizations. He foresees a bleak future characterized by “more needless wars or shadow conflicts sold by a militarized and irresponsible political elite; more wars mismanaged by an intellectually sclerotic and unimaginative senior officer corps; more wars that exact huge penalties without yielding promised outcomes...” (190). Bacevich decries the warrior-professional who has supplanted the citizen-soldier through the “conversion of military service from collective obligation to personal preference [for service]” (79). Accordingly, Bacevich charges the nation’s political elites, senior military officers, and disengaged citizenry with a breach of trust with American service members.

Both authors buttress their arguments on the founding documents of our nation—The Declaration of Independence and The US Constitution. They refer frequently to the principle of no large standing forces. They assert that greatly reduced numbers in the armed forces would limit leaders’ desire and ability to launch military operations. To man the forces needed for peacetime engagement, the authors offer alternatives to the all-volunteer force, but they are equally pessimistic about the viability of military conscription. Laich proposes a hybrid of a draft lottery for the reserve component with the option of enrolling in college Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs. Bacevich suggests a two-year requirement for national service that would enhance citizens’ sense of obligation to contribute to their nation. Any form of mandatory service would have to provide safeguards against the inequities that have plagued past conscription programs. All citizens must bear equal risk and share the burden of service.

It is appropriate to evaluate the viability of the all-volunteer force after its inception forty years ago—especially as we face the uncertainty of future decades. The strategic question remains a philosophical one: “What do we want the role of the United States to be in the world?” The answers to this fundamental query determine the role of U.S. armed forces, its composition, and the capabilities required to secure national interests. To inform such discourse, national security professionals and military members should consider the arguments and recommendations presented in these two works. Our nation can ill afford a breach of trust between its citizenry and those who serve to secure their collective interests.



Generals of the Army: Marshall, MacArthur, Eisenhower, Arnold, Bradley

Edited by James H. Willbanks

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In 2013, the United States Mint issued a set of commemorative coins honoring the only five officers to achieve the five-star rank of General of the Army. The half-dollar coin features Henry H. “Hap” Arnold and Omar N. Bradley. The dollar features George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Douglas MacArthur appears on the five-dollar gold piece. Authorized by an act of Congress that was sponsored by the US Army

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Command and General Staff College Foundation, the reverse of all three coins depict designs relating to Fort Leavenworth and the Staff College.

Generals of the Army was written as a companion piece to that special set of coins. Edited by Professor James H. Willbanks, the General of the Army George C. Marshall Chair of Military History and Director of the Department of Military History at CGSC, the book contains a chapter on each of the five-star generals, with an emphasis on their Fort Leavenworth experiences. The first chapter, “Officer Education and the Fort Leavenworth Schools, 1881-1940,” by Jonathan M. House, is an excellent capsule history of mid-level officer education in the US Army. That chapter alone is worth the price of the book. Volumes have been written about each of these US Army legends, and all but Marshall published their own memoirs. Yet, this handy little single-volume reference provides a tightly written set of profiles for comparing these five very different careers. Those careers also intertwined in different and sometimes ironic ways.

Douglas MacArthur never really attended a Leavenworth school; nor did he formally serve there as an instructor. He did serve as the commander of an engineer company at Leavenworth, and while there he lectured informally at the General Services School and the Cavalry School. Perhaps the most controversial of the major figures of American military history, MacArthur was the only general officer to serve in three major wars (World Wars I and II and Korea). He also reached five-star rank as a field marshal in the Philippine army several years before the rank existed in the US Army.

George C. Marshall never held a command in combat, but he is widely recognized as the “Organizer of Victory” in World War II. After the war, he went on to serve as Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense. He received the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in establishing the Marshall Plan for the recovery of Europe. Thanks to his foresight, Germany today remains one of America’s staunchest allies in the world. In 1906, Marshall attended the Infantry and Cavalry School (shortly renamed the School of the Line). Graduating first in his class, he was selected to attend the Staff College, and then served for two more years as an instructor in the Staff College’s Department of Engineering. Although MacArthur was far senior in terms of rank and time in the service, Marshall was the first army officer appointed to the newly established five-star rank in December 1944—one day after the promotion of Admiral William D. Leahy, chief of staff to President Roosevelt. As Secretary of Defense, Marshall in April 1951 supported President Harry Truman’s decision to relieve MacArthur from his command in Korea. Marshall also was the only five-star officer who was not a military academy graduate.

Dwight D. Eisenhower was convinced that his career was on a dead-end track after he was not assigned overseas during World War I. Nor had he even attended an officers’ branch school. But thanks to the mentorship of Major General Fox Conner, Eisenhower attended CGSC during 1925-26, and graduated first in his class. During the interwar years, Eisenhower as a major and then a lieutenant colonel served as MacArthur’s aide-de-camp, first when MacArthur was Chief of Staff of the Army, and then when MacArthur went to the Philippines. During World War II, Eisenhower’s rise in rank was meteoric, from

his promotion to colonel in March 1941 to general of the Army on 20 December 1944. The fact that his former aide received his fifth star only two days after MacArthur received his, always seemed to be a sore point with MacArthur. At one point in late 1951, MacArthur was also seen as Eisenhower's primary competition for the Republican presidential nomination.

Hap Arnold was the last promoted of the four original five-star officers authorized by the Congress for the army. The commander of US Army Air Forces during World War II, Arnold also was a semi-official member of the ad hoc Joint Chiefs of Staff. Trained as a pilot in the school established by the Wright Brothers, Arnold was a life-long advocate for military aviation. He also had the least promising interwar career of any World War II senior general. He received less-than-stellar evaluation reports and, after the court-martial of General Billy Mitchell, Arnold was exiled to a number of make-work assignments in remote places. On top of that, he thoroughly hated his time as a student at CSSC and even considered retiring from the army early because of that experience. Yet he persevered and ultimately presided over history's biggest expansion in military aviation. Two years after the US Air Force became a separate service in 1947, Congress approved changing Arnold's rank to General of the Air Force.

Omar N. Bradley was the last American officer promoted to five-star rank. During World War II, Congress authorized only four five-star positions each for the Army and Navy. But with the conversion of Arnold's rank to General of the Air Force in 1949, the Army could argue it had one allocation left. As the commander of the 12th Army Group during World War II, the Chief of Staff of the Army succeeding Eisenhower in 1948, and the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Bradley was the natural choice. He was promoted to General of the Army in September 1950. Like Eisenhower, Bradley did not serve overseas during World War I. Unlike Arnold, Bradley valued his time as a student at CGSC, and after graduating he went on to Fort Benning as an instructor at the Infantry School, where he came to the attention of Marshall who was then the assistant commandant of the school. In February 1941, Bradley was promoted to brigadier general, seven months ahead of Eisenhower. As Chairman of the Joint's Chiefs of Staff, Bradley supported President Truman's decision to relieve MacArthur, an officer who was already a brigadier general in June 1918 when Bradley was still a captain.

More than sixty years after the last US Army officer was promoted to five-star rank, Fort Leavenworth remains the crossroads of the US Army's officer corps, and almost every senior officer in the last hundred years has come through one of the Leavenworth Schools. Those who made it to the five-star level lived in a far different world strategically and politically than we do today, and the institution they served has likewise changed in many ways. Yet there remains a core foundation to the Profession of Arms that is timeless, and today's officers can still learn much by studying the careers of those who preceded us—especially these five.