

THE
ARMED FORCES
OFFICER

This splendid volume, conceived by General George C. Marshall, nurtured by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and developed by S.L.A. Marshall, contains timeless advice on the responsibilities of officers to their men, their profession and their nation. It does so with a rare mix of clarity, plain language, common sense and humor. The experience of military leaders in combat and in peacetime rises from every page.

The Armed Forces Officer is much more than a book on leadership. At its core is a conviction that the disciplines represented by superior officers are the same disciplines needed everywhere in American society. Preserve them, these pages command, for they are the stuff that will preserve the nation's commitment to liberty and justice.

In his introduction to a 1975 edition of the book, S.L.A. Marshall talks about the nation's spirit and unity as a "compelling obligation," and about love of country being "still the only possible refuge for intelligent American men and women in service; it is their sword and shield and the emblem of their advance. Everything that enters into the making of truly superior military officers would qualify them to live more generously and rewardingly in any other company. That, essentially, is what this manual has to say. Hardly a new and radically different treatment of the subject, it is at least as old as the American Dream."

The Marine Corps Association edition of The Armed Forces Officer is a reprint of the original version, first published in 1950.

Page 133

On D-day in Normandy, Lt. Turner B. Turnbull undertook to do with his platoon of 42 men a task which had been intended for a battalion; he was to block the main road to enemy forces pressing south from the Cherbourg area against the American right flank. In early morning he engaged a counterattacking enemy battalion, supported by mortars and a self-propelled gun at the village of Neuville au Plain. The platoon held its ground throughout the day. By dusk the enemy had closed wide around both its flanks and was about to cut the escape route. Turnbull had 23 men left. He said to the others, "There's one thing left to do; we can charge them." Pfc. Joseph Sebastian, who had just returned from reconnoitering to the rear, said, "I think there's a chance we can still get out; that's what we ought to do." Turnbull asked of his men, "What's your judgment?" They supported Sebastian as having the sounder idea. In a twinkling Turnbull made his decision. He told the others to get set for the run; he was losing men even while he talked; he ordered that the 12 wounded were to be left behind. Corp. James Kelly, first aid man, said he would stay with the wounded. Pfc Sebastian, who had argued Turnbull into a withdrawal, volunteered to stand his ground and cover the others with a BAR. Corp. Raymond Smitson said he would stay

by Sebastian and support him with hand grenades. Sgt. Robert Niland started for one of the machine guns, to help Smitson and Sebastian in covering the withdrawal, but was shot dead by a German closing in with a machine pistol before he could reach it. The 16 remaining survivors took off like so many shots fired from a pistol, at full speed but at intervals, to minimize the target. All got back to their Battalion, though Turnbull was killed in action a few days later. Their 1-day fight had preserved the flank of an Army. For economy of effort, and power of decision, there is not a brighter example in the whole book of war.

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmchist/officer.txt>