**MILITARY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**MARION EILEY**

Hello everyone. To family, friends, colleagues, fellow soldiers, and distinguished guests, welcome to this very important and historical change of responsibility ceremony. (**If there is anyone in particular that needs to be welcomed, do so here**). I would like to extend particular greetings to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and express our gratitude that you are here today, participating in and witnessing this event. It’s been said, “True patriotism isn’t cheap. It’s about taking on a fair share of the burden of keeping America going.” While some not in attendance today might think it somewhat of a “burden” to keep America going, I have a feeling that everyone here today understands the privilege and the power in the investment we’ve made to honor and secure our country.

To paraphrase General Dwight Eisenhower, “Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he or she wants to do it.” Since the eighteenth century, our military has shown pride in its leaders and has shown support, encouragement, and enthusiasm each time, as the chain of command and change of responsibility advances. As our armed forces evolve, so do we as an entity dedicated to the safety and security of our nation. As the times and tides evolve, so do our personnel. One thing that stays constant, however, is the foundation upon which we lead. That constancy…. That formula…. that matrix that guides and forges the key to our commitment, remains constant, and that is a tremendous point of pride. We stand by the heritage that supported our forebears and will continue to support those that follow in our footsteps.

It is interesting to note that General Baron Von Steuben, a Prussian military leader who fought beside General George Washington during the Revolutionary War, is credited with establishing training programs for soldiers that are still followed today. History tells us that he arrived at Valley Forge in February, 1778 and began his training with the goal and purpose to instill confidence and discipline into the combat exhausted troops. He outlined the duties of NCOs such as the Sergeant Major, Quartermaster Sergeant, and other key officers, but it was the company First Sergeant to which he directed most of his attention. According to Von Steuben, First Sergeants must be "intimately acquainted with the character of every Soldier in the company and should take great pains to impress upon their minds the indispensable necessity of the strictest obedience as the foundation of order and regularity."

As was the case then, and remains so now, the 1SG is the senior enlisted advisor to the Commander of the Company. 1SGs are responsible for maintaining and enforcing standards, and developing and training Soldiers in the unit so that all goals are achieved. This position is responsible for overseeing all administrative duties as well as protecting the health, welfare, and morale of all members of the unit and their families. The 1SG acts as coordinator for both internal training and functions, and as the lead liaison for all external partnerships and communication. It is the purpose of the 1SG to be the “face” of the company… and for their organization. He or she acts as a role model for all Soldiers, NCOs and Officers. To make a long story short, “The buck stops at the feet of the 1SG.” One can gauge the success and effectiveness of the 1SG by a simple barometer…. His or her work can go unnoticed…. Remember that an effective leader sees to it that he or she is able to inspire his team to action by making them feel it is what they want to do…

The 1SG has to be an expert in many areas. Here is a brief summary of the 1SG’s responsibilities:

* **Readiness:** The 1SG must assist the commander in prioritizing and implementing the unit’s training program, supervising medical readiness, establish and maintain connections with medical providers, the Integrated Disability System, and all entities that support organizational readiness. Other duties in this category involve advising the commander on the Uniform Code of Military Justice, supporting the Soldier for Life Transition program, and managing financial reports for the unit commander.
* **Leadership:** When it comes to leadership, the 1SG has to walk the walk and talk the talk. He or she must conduct themselves in an exemplary manner at all times and function in a way that fosters ethical, positive culture and climate both within the organization and beyond. The 1SG must be able to convey the commander’s vision and to lead… and follow… with respect, integrity, focus, and purpose.
* **Training Management:** The 1SG must be fully versed in all aspects of training and must be able to develop and maintain procedures that support growth, fulfillment, and effectiveness across all team functions and responsibilities. They must be able to lead “from the top down…” and be able to identify and rectify issues within the company in order to maintain peak performance for all.
* **Communications:** Effective, impactful communication of every form is required to be a valued and respected 1SG. The person in this capacity must be assertive as well as empathetic. They must be well-versed in listening as well as supervising. They must be able to understand instructions received and be able to impart the necessary instructions, support, and observations as needed.
* **Operations:** The 1SG must be fully versed in, and aware of, all aspects of the organization from leadership to planning, to carrying out commands and instructions. They must operate with common sense and a “finger on the pulse” to identify and implement best practices in support of the effectiveness and success of the company. They must be fluent in all Army doctrine associated with the command and its assignments and operations.
* **Program Management:** The 1SG must be prepared to train personnel in order to insure the perpetuity and adaptability of the company’s programs. They must be able to identify and nurture talent and to support those in positions to achieve their best. They must oversee communications and social media platforms in order to maintain a presence in the world and the community… one that focuses on the pride and positivity of being a part of the United States Army.

It’s been almost 250 years since General Baron Von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge to assist and support General Washington in his mission to serve our nation. General Von Steuben acquitted himself quite admirably. While legend tells us he was not even able to speak English, his intention, understanding, and commitment to his purpose has guided our military for generations and shows us that through exacting, disciplined, time tested procedures, we can have a military we admire and support. And thanks to the protocols established back then, we have soldiers that rise to the challenge and become effective, commanding 1SGs and that easily makes all of us very proud. Thank you!!