



Inscribed over the entrance of the Cadet Gym of the United States Military Academy at West Point are these immortal words of General Douglas MacArthur:

*Upon the fields of friendly strife
Are sown the seeds
That, upon other fields,
And on other days,
Will bear the fruits of victory.*

General MacArthur did not make reference to the strength of body and prowess of agile cunning that is enhanced by a cordial competition in the sports arena; but rather to the strength of character that is engendered in suffering the blows and wounds of defeat as well as victory. The strength of character that is formed by humility in victory and a gracious acceptance of defeat is that which comes from something more than physical stamina – it is a spiritual quality that comes from a love of God, of Country, and of our fellow Citizen.

The friendly strife (which is non-commercial) is the kind that empowers us to suffer defeat, but never to be defeated in spirit. It is the kind of strength that is most desired in the American soldier at arms. It is the old guard of personal integrity and uncompromising dedication to the principles of God and Country that has resulted in the greatest blessings of Providence upon our fair land from its inception as a nation.

We have witnessed, with stinging shame, the pitiful sight of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the Navy Admiral who is the Pentagon spokesman, groveling in the confused maze of political correctness to justify policies that are un-American and hurtful to the principles upon which our military has always found sound footing.

The soldier, sailor, and airman – above all others – must exemplify the character, courage, and faith that has most characterized the American nation throughout the annals of our history. To quote the words of our Lord: ***“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”*** (John 15:13) These words set the premise for the valor and sacrifice offered on the altars of freedom of the brightest and

finest of our military and naval soldiers of decades past. It is a long line of khaki and olive drab that recedes into our past and marches up to our future years with the unshakeable resolve that this country shall never face the tribulations of a ten-horned dictator. Should we forget the lessons learned of past nations who forgot the principles of their founding, the words of Rudyard Kipling resound loudly as a reminder:

*Nations have passed away and left no traces.
And History gives the naked cause of it –
one single, simple reason in all cases;
they fell because their peoples were not fit.*

Rudyard Kipling

If the faith and character of the American people fail in the face of modern challenge, then we shall no longer deserve the blessings of God that have showered so abundantly upon us in ages past. It matters not what leaders we send to represent us; it is the collective conscience and character of the American nation that shall decide our fate – and the American men and women at arms are the express image of that character.