

On The War

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General Douglas MacArthur was a great man. General MacArthur had success as a strategist and commander of the U.S. military during World War 2. MacArthur endorsed the use of nuclear bombs against China to reduce their numerical advantages in the Korean War. He was a great man, but he was also a dangerous individual who believed that victory was the only way to win a war.

General MacArthur was called to action during World War 2 and devised several strategies to help the Allies gain the upper hand against the Axis. His ideas were deployed in battle and effectively revolutionized the Philippine army he was commanding, he is still regarded well among them now. Later he was holding one side of a river while Japanese operatives held the opposite side. The Japanese crossed the river and most were torn to pieces by mounted machine gun, those that were not inflicted 4,000 casualties in the American ranks. Douglas MacArthur still retained his self esteem however, and when meeting President Truman for the first time met him in a greasy, unwashed uniform. This made a distinct impression on Truman, who would later fire MacArthur after the General suffered a string of losses. After this he retired and was later presented with the Sylvanus Thayer award at West Point.

When MacArthur accepts the Sylvanus Thayer award he is no longer a soldier, he is an old man whose life is dwindling. He realizes this and is calm when giving this address to the gathered crowd at West Point. His speech give notice to the fact he has received the award, but switches to something that MacArthur is much more eager to speak on, soldiers. Soldiers, in MacArthur's eyes, are noble men who deny themselves many comforts for the sake of their duty, honor, and country. He gives a set of regulations which the American Soldier is to be defined by. This set of rules defines for him the ideal soldier, a man who constantly challenges himself even when he has the opportunity for rest, who sacrifices whatever he has so that others may benefit, and who

purports himself well always to better represent his native land. This is the standard which he holds men to, a standard of perfection not even he could possibly meet. MacArthur should be well aware of this because his failures are equal to his victories. He gives the standard here not as one might suspect as damning to a few, but damning to all equally. As he says, "They teach you to be proud and unbending in honest failure, but humble and gentle in success."

The address makes no attempt to conceal the horror of war. It actively acknowledges that during it men would slog for miles in wet clothes and soaked packs during weather that froze men's lips to blue. It does say that this is their legacy, that they endured these savage conditions so that others would not have to, they sacrificed. The nobility or humbleness of one's birth had no bearing on the dignity of a soldier's death, the address states. MacArthur has been one of these souls bound to the code of duty, honor, and country and he respects those bound to that code in his address. The speech dictates that war is beautiful and golden only because of the morals and ethics of the soldier. The war itself is monstrous and awful but the objective of the soldier is a pure and radiant beacon lighting the way to one thing, victory. MacArthur is awed by the advancement of science, but he still sees nothing but the goal of victory. The advancements are at most, a new way to further that goal.

MacArthur's address treats the military man as a class apart from the normal, one not concerned with politics, academics, or any civilian matter. The servicemen are called to wage our wars. It must be their sole preoccupation if we are to reach our rapturous victory. It is the duty of civilians to police the government, and the army's duty to regulate the military world. The soldier is also bound by the precedent set by previous men of action. The current fighting force must defend their nation or be ruined by the knowledge that he has not only failed, but rendered useless the men of the past who defended the nation before him. The address ends as MacArthur

states that, "We are not war-mongers." Those in battle hope the hardest that it will end because he has seen the beauty of peace, and he acts to defend it from those who try to take it with force.

General Douglas MacArthur died in Norfolk Virginia in 1964. He was an accomplished soldier whose actions have both saved and killed countless individuals. One should not measure men like this, but learn from his mistakes, and repeat his successes.