

**THE SEVENTEENTH HUGH J. CLAUSEN LECTURE IN
LEADERSHIP***

**SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY
RAYMOND F. CHANDLER III¹**

* This is an edited transcript of a lecture delivered by Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III to members of the staff and faculty, their distinguished guests, and officers attending the 60th Judge Advocate Officer Graduate Course at The Judge Advocate General's School, Charlottesville, Virginia, on November 4, 2011. The Clausen Lecture is named in honor of Major General Hugh J. Clausen, who served as The Judge Advocate General, U.S. Army, from 1981 to 1985 and served over thirty years in the U.S. Army before retiring in 1985. His distinguished military career included assignments as the Executive Officer of The Judge Advocate General; Staff Judge Advocate, III Corps and Fort Hood; Commander, U.S. Army Legal Services Agency and Chief Judge, U.S. Army Court of Military Review; The Assistant Judge Advocate General; and finally, The Judge Advocate General. After his retirement from active duty, General Clausen served for a number of years as the Vice President for Administration and Secretary to the Board of Visitors at Clemson University.

¹ Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III was sworn in as the 14th Sergeant Major of the Army on March 1, 2011. Sergeant Major of the Army Chandler has held a variety of leadership positions throughout his career ranging from tank crewman to command sergeant major (CSM).

As Sergeant Major of the Army, Chandler serves as the Army Chief of Staff's personal adviser on all enlisted-related matters, particularly in areas affecting Soldier training and quality of life. He devotes the majority of his time to traveling throughout the Army observing training and talking to Soldiers and their Families.

He sits on a wide variety of councils and boards that make decisions affecting enlisted Soldiers and their Families and is routinely invited to testify before Congress. Chandler was born in Whittier, California, and entered the Army in Brockton, Massachusetts, in September 1981. He attended One Station Unit Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and graduated as a 19E, Armor Crewman.

Sergeant Major of the Army Chandler has served in all tank crewman positions and has had multiple tours as a troop, squadron, and regimental master gunner. He has served in the 1st Infantry Division (Forward), 2d Infantry Division, 4th Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division, 3d Armor Division, 2d ACR, 3d ACR, U.S. Army Armor School, and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. He also served as a first sergeant (1SG) in four different detachments, troops, and companies. As a sergeant major (SGM), he served as Operations SGM in 1/2 ACR and as CSM in 1/7 Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Army Garrison Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the U.S. Army Armor School CSM. Chandler was assigned as the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy CSM in December 2007. In June 2009, Chandler became the 19th Commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) and the first enlisted commandant in USASMA history.

Chandler's military and civilian education includes all levels of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System, M60A3 and M1/M1A1 Tank Master Gunner Course, Battle Staff NCO Course, First Sergeant Course, Basic Instructor Training, Total Army Instructor Trainer Course, Small Group Instructor Trainer Course, Video Tele-Training Instructor Trainer Course, Army Management Staff Course,

Thanks. Appreciate it, man. Thank you. Thank you. Please, please, take your seats. Thanks.

You know, first of all, thanks for the opportunity to do this. You know, I was talking about this earlier with General Ayres, and you never realize or, I guess, understand the magnitude of things until you're actually sometimes presented with them. And I'm here representing 1.1 million soldiers and their families to you in a dissertation and some questions about leadership. And that's a pretty humbling experience, especially when you look at, you know, each one of the placards of folks that have actually come and spoken in this group. It's kind of overwhelming sometimes. It's just like, my God, how did I get here? How did this happen? Who set this up? *Laughter.* But it's truly an honor, and when you look at the individuals that could have come to speak to you about leadership I really have to ask the question of what am I going to add?

You've had sixteen different individuals that have come from all across the nation and the world to talk to you about their thoughts on leadership. And I'm number seventeen and I hope that I have some things that you're going to find worthy, and it's really going to be from noncommissioned officer's (NCO's) perspective. And I hope that there are some great questions that come out of this that I may be able to answer for you.

It is an honor to be here, it really is. I didn't really understand the importance of the legal community until I became a first sergeant (1SG) for the first time and really had to worry about not only leading soldiers in tank platoons, but really managing transitions for a piece of the Army. And part of that—it is those things that have to do with the law and over time developed a relationship with both paralegals and attorneys, JAGs,

Garrison CSM Course, and various other professional development courses. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Administration from Upper Iowa University.

Sergeant Major of the Army Chandler's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (7th OLC), Army Commendation Medal (7th OLC), Army Achievement Medal (1st OLC), Army Good Conduct Medal (9th Award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Army Service Ribbon, Korean Defense Service Medal, Overseas Service Medal (Numeral 4), Noncommissioned Officer Professional Service Ribbon (Numeral 4), Iraq Campaign Medal (with Campaign Star), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Superior Unit Award, and the Combat Action Badge. He is a recipient of the Order of Saint George (Bronze Medallion), the Distinguished Order of Saint Martin, and the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.

to understand how to effectively lead an organization. And it is without a doubt a hard lesson learned—in some cases, bad mistakes or ill-informed decisions that caused the unit to be less effective than it have been. And I've learned some hard knocks.

First of all, really, thank you for what you do, each and every day, for what you do for our Army and ultimately our nation. And for those of you who are here from one of our partner nations, thanks for coming to be a part of this and to learn from us and how we do things. We don't always get it right. You know, and you'll probably see a way, but it is our way and it is what serves us best. And I appreciate you being here.

And are there some spouses here? I know there are. If you're a spouse, an Army spouse, a spouse of a service member, could you please stand up? Spouses of service members, please stand up. How about a round of applause?

Applause.

Hopefully, my greatest wish of a lot of things in the Army is that one day our spouses are recognized like our soldiers in the uniform in an airport where someone sees that they're military spouses, and tells them thank you, and gives them that seat in first class. Because, really for me, spouses have borne the brunt of the last ten years in a dignified way that I think few people really understand in our country. And I don't think we do enough, but just wanted to tell each and every one of you thank you. Really, from the bottom of my heart and my wife's, just thanks for all you do. You help each of us in uniform in ways I don't think any of us really imagine until we take a step back every now and then. So, thank you for what you do.

If you are a NCO in here, how about raising your hand? Noncommissioned officers.

Hooah.

Some of you probably heard me talk before; right? Okay. Well, I won't be quite as colorful as I have been in the past.

You may have heard some of this before, but it is really about leadership, and we'll talk about that. I think that's pretty much the same types of things I've talked about in the past. And then I think we've got

some from the 60th Graduate Course. If you're a member of that course, could you raise your hand? Hooah. Thank you for all you do. I really appreciate it, thanks.

And then our Senior Legal Administrator Symposium, our warrant officers; are you here? Awesome. Thanks for what you do. I really appreciate it. How many of you were former enlisted soldiers? Almost all of you; right? Well, thanks. Thanks for what you do and thank you for choosing to stay in the Army and contribute. It really makes a difference.

You know, and I'd really like to, again, recognize the Ayreses. Thank you both for inviting us down. Sergeant Major (SGM) Lister and your bride, thank you so much. And the Tylers, thank you so much for giving us an opportunity to be here.

I brought two people who are on my team that are actually from the 27D field. I've got SGM Warner. And I don't know if you know this or not, but SGM Warner is a part of a very small group of individuals for noncommissioned officers that work in the Congressional Liaison Office. We've only had that program for a couple of years; it started with the year of the NCO. And she represents our Army to our elected officials, and now is working for me as my "handler." I don't know if I help her very much in handling me, but she's really a testament to your Corps, that amongst a huge number of candidates, she was selected to do this job, that's really a testament to what you do here and what you do in the field.

And then I've got another—Staff Sergeant (SSG) Meadows, who is a 27D who worked for me at the Sergeants Major Academy. And this is really about the other part of what we'll talk about today is about leadership and finding people who have enormous potential and recognizing that how you manage talent and broaden people really comes down to not just what they do on their job, but those larger skill sets, that adaptability, agility, a resource manager, a leader developer. Those things that we say that are important to us as an NCO Corps, how do you help them achieve greater things than they may have thought possible?

When I became the Commandant at the Sergeants Major Academy, this was first time that there had been an enlisted commandant who was vested with a great deal of authorities that hadn't been previously vested in our Army's history and that was a challenging time to understand

really what that meant.

Sergeant Meadows, who came to the Academy to be the 27D as a sergeant, took on this enormous challenge.

If you think about it, you've got a class of at least 600 Type A SGMs, students, who probably just left some 1SG or SGM position, and the only thing they know is about pushing troops and now they're in charge of no one but themselves. Okay. So she has to deal with all of them and a very senior academic faculty, a lot of retired SGMs who, some of them still think they're in the Army. You know, she managed, transitioning that command from a commissioned officer, a colonel-level billet in our Army, to an enlisted command and understanding how to develop the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and the memorandum of agreement (MOA) that needed to go in place and then work on some authorities and regulations to try to set that position for exception. She did that on her own, spent a lot of time doing research on top of the fact that she's a single-parent, raising three daughters, working on her Master's degree, and took on this enormous challenge; she could have gone to one of the brigades there at Fort Bliss. That's a testament to her leadership and desire to do what she did. So thanks again for all you do, and thanks for being part of the team.

Leadership. We have got a lot of things going on in the Army today. No kidding. We've had a lot of things going on in the Army for a long time, as long as the Army's been around. And if I can give you one thing that I'd ask you to do, as a leader, your real responsibility is to manage transitions. It really is. It's how you move your organization and the Army, ultimately, through periods of time.

Now, that may sound a bit different than what we've talked about or what may have been presented in the past, but it's about transition. We're in a transition right now. Okay. We have about 200,000 soldiers that are deployed somewhere around the world doing something for our Army and the nation. The major focus areas obviously are Iraq and Afghanistan. We've also got this drawdown that's going to take place across our entire army. We're going to probably have a much smaller Army in the near future than we do today. We're in the midst of conversations about entitlement reforms and whether or not we need to change our retirement system and change other compensation. And there's a huge amount of anxiety in our Army. There is.

I travel a little bit and intraveling around over the last several months, inevitably I will find a young soldier, a private, with about six months in the Army whose one question that they want to ask me is: Am I going to have a retirement? What do you do when you get asked that question, because that soldier really shouldn't be worried about retirement at this point in time. *Laughter.* Really should not. That is not what we want them focused on, is it? We want them focused on what they need to do to continue to develop their skills and not about some benefit that's at least nineteen years and six months down the road. That's a transition. That's something that you, as a leader, whether you're a green tab wearer or not, have to engage in.

We've had huge amounts of concerns in our Army about suicides, reducing high-risk behaviors, and sexual assaults and harassment, and the uptick in domestic violence, and other bad behavior in our force. How do we manage these transitions? We do that with engaged leadership.

We say that often, but how do you do that? How do you actually engage yourself as a leader? Well, really, again, from my perspective you have to be a person of candor.

I have a son who's an attorney. He's not in the military, but he is a partner in a law firm in Atlanta. I asked him a little bit about coming here to talk and he said, good luck. *Laughter.*

One thing about attorneys is if you get them all in one room, you're going to have as many attorneys as you do opinions. But it's really about being candid and being able to look someone in the eye and say, "You are not right." But then what? Then it's okay, "Here's how we're going to get you right and then how we follow up." That's relatively easy when you say it, but it takes a good deal of courage to talk to someone candidly about where they may not be quite right. And we've got challenges in this area today, specifically with the health of our force, behavioral health. We do have challenges with behavioral health in our Army, and I know many of you understand that. But it takes courage to tell someone that you need some help.

So I'll give you a little bit of my experience. You know, I deployed to Iraq in 2004 and 2005, and at that time in our Army, we kind of thought that everybody was a tough guy or gal and you go there and do your thing and come back and this will be overwith.

Well, roughly in the June, July time frame things really started to change pretty drastically in Iraq. And I had a series of pretty traumatic events that happened to me. Coming out of Iraq, I was a changed person. I wasn't going to admit that to anybody because I was a tough guy. I was a SGM. You don't do that. You don't say on your post-deployment health risk assessment that you have some challenges in certain areas; right?

I'm not asking anyone else to compromise their integrity, but I'm going to be truthful with you and tell you that I did not lead at that time. I did what I needed to do to check the block and get out of there because I needed to move on to the next job or whatever. And over the next several years, what had happened in Iraq continued to eat away at me as a leader, as a person, as a father, and as a husband until ultimately, when I became the commandant of the Sergeants Major Academy, the stress of that drove me to a point where I was self-destructing. And it took some people that I love very much to tell me that I was not right.

I listened because that slap in the face is sometimes what it takes to tell you that you have to get back on the right track and be the leader that you sit up there and talk about in safety briefings or a session like this.

So I went and talked for two-and-a-half years and still today, I spend time with behavioral health care specialists to talk about my issues. I'm a better soldier. But that is the least important thing for me. I am a better man. I'm a better husband. And I'm a better father because of it. Now, it took an act of courage for people, whom I love very much, to tell me that was jacked up. It did. And that is important. I need you and the Army needs each of you to be that kind of leader.

You know, we all know when someone is not quite right. And it takes courage to say, "Hey brother, hey sister, let's go for a walk and talk about some things." We all need that. Ten years is a long time for the stress and strain of what's happened in our Army to build up, and it's going to take us a long time to recover from this. And it's not over yet.

So courage, candor, and taking that extra time. I need your help with that and the Army, our nation, needs your help with that. It is really about a commitment to the nation when you say that you're going to do this. You know, each of us takes an oath in their own way: I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States, or words to that effect, that oath which subordinates you to that civilian authority, which

ultimately places something on your collar or on the uniform that you wear, inherently, no matter who you are, also places the responsibility to be a leader upon you, no matter what your rank. We do not have any Specialists or Privates in here; right? No. Okay. So we've got noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, commissioned officers, and civilians.

We all have to be leaders. The challenges that our Army faces are challenges that will really shape where we are ten years from now. And it's going to take leaders who manage transitions to see us through this time. And you've got to ask the question: What type of an Army do you want to have?

I came in the Army in 1981. And I think the only person that's been in the Army longer, in this group, than I have is SGM Tyler. *Laughter.* Because you just look old, man. *Laughter.*

But seriously, in 1981 we had really just started to transition out of the hollow force. If you remember, I think that's when, General Whitcomb stood up in front of Congress and said, we have a hollow Army. And we started to really push towards recruiting folks and bringing up our level of competencies; we started to introduce systems. Well, we're not going to be in 1981 again if we choose not to have been an Army that is hollow because we'll be engaged leaders. That's up to you.

General Ayres and I, we're going to retire sometime in the very near future. You know, a few years from now, three-and-a-half years from now, I'll be retired. Sir, I'm not going to put anything on your plate or put any bad whoo-doo on you, you know, but sometime, eventually, you're going to be retired too. And you that are seated here are going to be in those senior positions to influence our Army.

So what kind of Army do you want to have? Do you want to have one that after ten years of war is without a doubt the most effective fighting force we've ever put on the battlefield, that is a little ragged around the edges, that really needs to put its arm around itself and say, it's okay to be a human, but to be moving forward? Or do you want have one that's hollow, broken, and you're going to have to try and rebuild it? I want the former. But it will be your legacy, your legacy of leadership that really gets us through the next ten years and into the 2020s.

How are we going to do that? With courage and candor, with managing transitions; with being able to look someone in the eye and say, “Ma’am, you are in left field with the hockey stick saying throw me the ball.” *Laughter*. But we can get there. Seriously though, it is about having the courage to tell somebody where they need to be.

We’ve got great programs right now. We’re looking at our entire leader-developing strategy. We said this is where we want to be in the next several years. We’re going to align some things for officers as far as Officer Evaluation Reports looking at where people are blocked so you can really start to separate the wheat from the chaffe. We’re looking at the same type of thing for our NCO Corps to not only hold leaders, raters, and senior raters accountable for developing their subordinates but to also give that soldier some responsibility for his future because I do believe it’s a two-way street. You’ve got to have soldiers that are accountable for themselves and their development and leaders that are accountable to them. And throughout the NCO Corps, we’ve lost that a little bit. So we’re going to continue to work on these things. But at the end of the day, NCOs do two things: They accomplish missions, and they take care of their soldiers. They get you the last few hundred yards, right? The officer is going to give you the plan, say this is the direction we want to go, and the Sergeant says, “Okay, sir, let’s get after it” and get you to the objective.

So for us it’s as an NCO Corps, we should spend less time being the absolute best technical expert you can be and instead be the best leader because that’s what I would expect of you. You’re already technical experts, and there’s really not that much you’re going to learn in your technical field beyond now. But you are going to learn to be more strategic and visionary leaders, helping your soldiers and pulling them along and moving our Army forward.

You know, we’ve done so many things with our NCO Corps over the last several years that we never expected them to do before 9/11. I’m sure that—well—actually where is SGM Woods? Okay. Sergeant Major Woods, perfect example. Up until about two years ago, we probably were not going to have a CSM from the JAG Corps except here at the school and at OTJAG; right? Now, you’ve got four. Why? Because of your leadership, what you offer in your skills and experience. We’ve got to continue to think about that, and I truthfully don’t want you to come to the school some-day as the school SGM. That might be a great feather in your cap, but I bet you would be a brigade level CSM or

a division or post-level CSM because you've got the skills that we need, and we can't just keep that in one area.

So how do you really look at these broadening experiences? How do you challenge people to do something out of their comfort zone? That's one of these transitions that we're trying to accomplish within the NCO Corps. How do you look at somebody and say, "Hey SSG Meadows, I think you have great opportunity here in the future. And you're going to come up here to the office of the SGM and you're not going to do a single thing as a 27D, but your skills, your knowledge, and your experience, are going to serve the Army. And we're going to take a little risk and take you out of your comfort zone. We're going to broaden your mind because we have a much longer-term vision for where we see you in the future."

That's leadership. That's not just saying you're the best 27D Staff Sergeant since sliced bread. No. You're a great SSG who happens to be a 27D, who can do a lot more than just be a 27D. We don't want one-trick ponies. We want you to be as broadly skilled as possible.

You know, I actually had the fortune to have known a couple of great JAGs over my time. They all did tremendous things because they opened my mind to other possibilities besides where I wanted to go.

Now, as a 1SG we usually are in the skull-dragging business, you know. Really, it's about being a kind of father of the unit. That's what we say is the 1SG's responsibility. You're the father of the unit. You're the disciplinarian. You're the one that's supposed to set the standards, be the standard bearer, say this is what right looks like, and if you're not doing right, we're going to get you to right real quick. Or if not, we're going to have you exit Army. That's not always the best way there is to be the skull-dragger, so some attorney, some JAG, basically showed me other ways to get after the objective than through force and ignorance. That's kind of the methodology that we have for most of the Army's NCO Corps is we're going to get to this thing and we are going to bash our way through it and move on to the next event. And we'll pick up the pieces afterwards. It's great attorneys, though, that show you other ways to get after the objective and also teach you something along the way.

That's what you bring to the table. Your experiences outside of legal assistance or admin law or being a prosecutorial attorney or being defense or practicing international law: it's the experiences that help you

set the conditions for that leader to be effective. That's where I would tell you I would look for your help, where you're being a leader when you do that.

I also had the experience at times where you can't get an answer out of your JAG. We want to skirt inside of this thing and not hang ourselves out there and say, "Hey, sir or ma'am, this is my best advice." Can't have that; can't have that.

It's funny. I sit in this Chief of Staff of the Army's morning stand-up. General Odierno does a morning stand-up with the entire Army staff every morning, and it's always interesting to watch Lieutenant General Chipman. *Laughter.* Now, you get the G3 in there talking about what's going on; and the G1 about something with people, you know; the G2 about something that's going on with Intel; and then you get the chaplain who wants to give a prayer. And you have to admire Lieutenant General Chipman because I'm sure after all of his career and everybody poking fun at the attorney, he always is in there with a smile on his face and is saying something that the boss needs to hear. That's leadership. That's leadership. He's helping manage Army transitions.

When you think about drawing the size of the Army down by 50,000 on active duty; that's one in ten soldiers. So when you talk about an infantry squad of nine soldiers, that's at least one out of every squad gone. That is tough. We're going to do it in five years, and it may not be the end, because for the Army it's about people, not systems. It's people. Our budget gives us people. Then you buy stuff for the people to use to fight and win our nation's wars. So it's the people business and how you manage that transition to say we do appreciate your service; there may not be a seat for you at the table anymore though. That is tough stuff. That's where courage and candor come in.

Again, like we talked about earlier, what is your advice to somebody who has two soldiers. One of them has been deployed and done great things and they just keep getting DUIs? And then we've got this other person that hasn't deployed and they're doing a good job. How do we shape that for the commander to do what's right? And that person who, even though they fought and won our nation's wars, are not being the total soldier that we want them to be, and frankly, if they're not willing to rehabilitate themselves, they don't have a seat at the table. They're not on the Army team. That's tough stuff. And when you see these four stars and three stars struggling with that or the Secretary saying, how do

we have soldiers do these things that we're asking them to do now? It's you that's going to help lead us through these challenging times.

We're going to retain fewer people in the Army. So for the enlisted population and officers, there are going to be fewer people who are afforded the privilege to serve. That's a transition. Up until now, every soldier that was qualified for reenlistment could reenlist. That may not be the case in the future. How do you tell somebody that you're fully qualified, but sorry? Thank you for your service. That, in and of itself, that mindset is a transition. Officers who have taken the oath of commission and have performed well, maybe we'll get to a point where we're not going to be able to have as many because of this ratio thing; it's about one officer for everyone 4.7 soldiers. So if you have fewer enlisted soldiers, you're going to have fewer officers. We haven't done that for a long time. And it was painful when we did a drawdown back in the '90s; and frankly, we didn't manage it very well. And we lost some of our best talent, especially in terms of commissioned officers.

How do we manage that transition differently this time so that we make the people feel that they're value added, they're important, and we want them to stay even if they don't have that personal satisfaction of deployment as much as we used to? That's going to be tough. That's a transition. That's going to take leaders with the courage and candor who look into the future and aren't just fixated on what happens tomorrow.

So what are you going to do about that? What are you going to do? Not, "what's the Army going to do?" Not, "what's the JAG Corps going to do? But what are you captain, major, colonel, sergeant, 1SG, SGM, what are you going to do to lead our Army in your piece of the pie? I'll tell you, the Chief does not want to be a 10,000-mile screwdriver. And I think you guys have probably heard me say this before. I don't want to be a 10,000-mile screwdriver from the Pentagon trying to adjust things from that building.

These issues that confront us—yeah, they're big. There are going to be challenges, but they're going to provide us opportunities. Those opportunities are going to be presented where you are. You're going to have to see it, and then seize the opportunity to shape the Army to where you want it to be. I hope where you want it to be is that place where we are today. And not someplace back in 1980 or '81, where only those really who didn't have another opportunity chose to stay in the Army. And we had to spend fifteen years building this thing back to something

that we're proud of today. Nor do I think that we really want to have as our legacy after losing so much of our treasure, losing so much of our blood, losing so many of our brothers and sisters in a place where we look in the mirror and say, how did we get here? Is that the legacy or the memory you want to leave them? So I challenge you with that, to think about that.

This is not all doom and gloom. A lot of great things are going on. I'll tell you that; you have great leadership in your Army. You know, one of the interesting people that I've met is Secretary McHugh. Anybody met Secretary McHugh before? The guy is incredible when you talk to him. I'd never been involved at this level of the Army before. I've never really met a Secretary of the Army or actually talked to him or spent any time around him. He's committed. He's very committed. He puts himself out there every day. He's an amazing leader.

General Odierno, many of you know. I did not know General Odierno very well when he became the Chief of Staff of the Army. I knew his son. His son was in my squadron in Iraq, and he's a great leader. He's exactly the right leader that we need, both of them, for our Army today. But who's next? And in twenty years, who's going to be the next TJAG for our Army? Do we know who that is? Probably somebody here is going to be in a position close to that. How do you set the conditions for that person to be seen? It's going to take leadership to point them out.

So those are my thoughts on leadership. It's about managing transitions. It really is about how you approach your subordinates, your peers, and just as importantly, your superiors with courage and candor. And to be able to look them in the face and say we've got a problem; not sugar coat it, not let it stay off to the side until you develop the situation, not say, "Hey, Chandler is not quite right; been moping around here for a while, showing up late to work. Somebody will handle it." You have got to handle it. I got to handle it. We all have to handle it because if not, we'll lose a soldier, either physically lose a soldier or lose them to the Army who may one day be up here presenting a lecture on leadership if we have paid attention. That's managing transitions.

So I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you. I think we've got some question time. I do have prerogative. Okay, I'm not Bobby Brown. *Laughter.* But as the SGM of the Army, I do get at least three questions, and we don't get to leave or go on to something else. I know

there was a bunch of questions that I was asked to talk about that had to do with the role of noncommissioned officers and officers and how do we build that team. I'd love to talk to you about that, and I'd like to talk to you about anything else. Sometimes when I come to these forums--and I'm sure it didn't happen here--soldiers say hey, you can't ask this question. Okay, I'm just going to put it out there: Don't ever tell that to your soldiers. Let them ask whatever they want; don't be afraid. You'd be amazed by their intellect, by their thoughts.

So I appreciate the opportunity to spend time with you and I look forward to your questions. Thank you very much.