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A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AS VISUALIZED BY  
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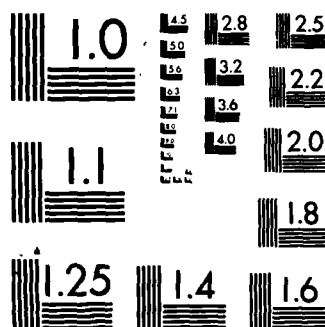
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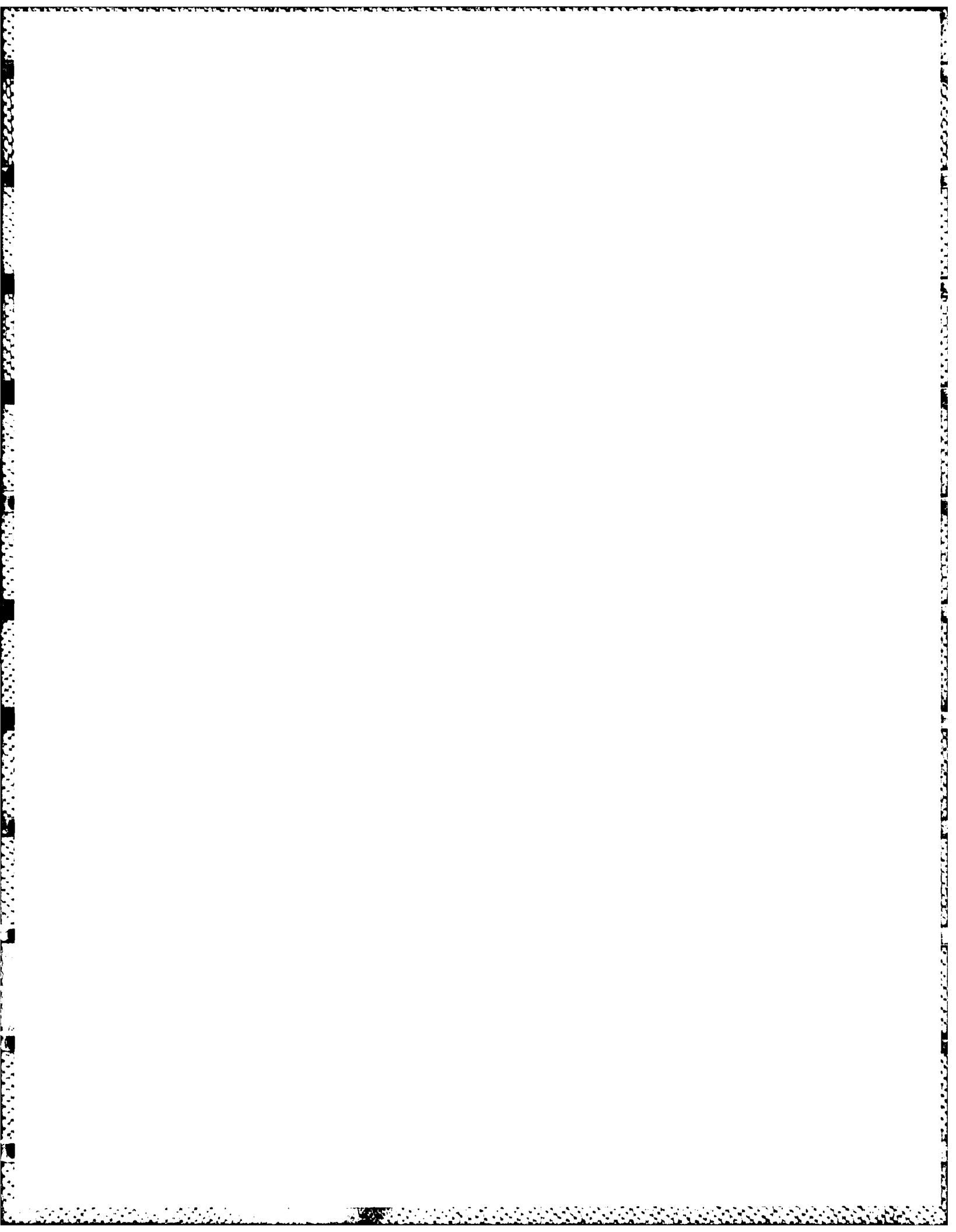
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**REPORT NUMBER** 85-2525

**TITLE** A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AS VISUALIZED BY LIEUTENANT  
GENERAL JOHN P. FLYNN--THE SENIOR AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR  
IN VIETNAM

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for graduation.

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE  
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## PREFACE

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Americans of every generation who have valued freedom more than life itself have fought and died to preserve that national heritage. These heroes demanded justice and equality, believed in the value and worth of the individual, and held that every person has the God-given right to determine his or her own destiny. This heritage of freedom is our most valued possession, and its blessings are man's greatest gift to his fellow man. Each generation of Americans receives this gift from the previous generation with the knowledge that it has the solemn obligation to protect and cherish freedom for the future.

Our country, and the ideals it represents, continues because of the love and selfless determination of those people who have gone before us. Call this dedicated patriotism, call it courage, or call it bravery—these are the very concepts which can be used to describe American fighting men who found themselves prisoners of war (POWs) in Vietnam. Their professionalism and their leadership sustained them through torture, isolation, and the stresses of war. Lieutenant General John P. Flynn's perspective, as the senior American POW in Vietnam, provides an excellent case study of the challenges experienced by military officers who provided leadership during captivity in the Vietnam War. The Armed Forces Officer, a guide to the principles of leadership in the Armed Forces, states, "It is out of the impact of ideals that people develop the strength to face situations from which it would be normal to run away" (29:15). I feel that the need to understand and sustain these ideals makes them worthy of study by today's military professional. Now that it is our turn to accept the responsibility for maintaining freedom, we may refer to the heroic example of those who preceded us in this task.

Leadership presents great opportunity, but entails great responsibility. As we enter the 1990s, it is clear that America must continue to provide responsible leadership to combat acts of tyranny and oppression throughout the world. Although the likelihood of being a prisoner of war is remote for many of us, an understanding of the ideals which fostered strength of conviction and, consequently, showed us how to cope with the stresses of combat, will sustain us when we are called on and respond to situations of the future. In the words of General Flynn: "The past is useful only as it affects the future" (12:25).

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Major Richard K. Smith was commissioned as a second lieutenant through the AFROTC program at Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia, in 1971. His assignments have included duty in administration, inspector general, executive support, and personnel management. Major Smith recently completed an assignment as Chief, Officer Promotions and Professional Military Education Branch, Deputy Chief of Staff Personnel, Military Airlift Command (MAC), at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. While assigned at HQ MAC, he was selected as the 1983 USAF Senior Personnel Manager of the Year. He received his Master of Arts degree in Personnel Management from Central Michigan University in 1976. Major Smith is a graduate of Squadron Officer School, Officer Administration Management Course, Airlift Operations School, and Professional Manpower and Personnel Management School. He is currently a student at the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Preface-----	iii
About the Author-----	iv
List of Illustrations-----	vi
Executive Summary-----	vii
 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION: LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN P. FLYNN-----	 1
CHAPTER TWO - THE PRISONER OF WAR EXPERIENCE-----	4
CHAPTER THREE - A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AS VISUALIZED BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN P. FLYNN-----	14
CHAPTER FOUR - THE CHALLENGES TO FUTURE LEADERSHIP-----	25
CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSION-----	33
 APPENDICES:	
Appendix A - United States Air Force Biography -- Lieutenant General John P. Flynn-----	38
Appendix B - Discussion of Prisoner of War Experience at the 1979 USAF Chaplain Conference, Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado-----	42
Appendix C - Extract TIG Brief, 22 September 1978, From the Inspector General's Notebook...Changing of the Watch-----	45

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


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### TABLES

FIGURE 1 - Prisoner of War Treatment-----	12
FIGURE 2 - Prisoner of War Treatment-----	13
FIGURE 3 - Hierarchy of Values-----	24

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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REPORT NUMBER 85-2525

AUTHOR(S) Major Richard K. Smith, USAF

TITLE A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AS VISUALIZED BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN P. FLYNN—THE SENIOR AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR IN VIETNAM

I. Purpose: To answer the question: Can a conceptual leadership model be developed to assist officers in meeting the future challenges to Air Force leadership?

II. Problem: Writers continually document failures in personal integrity, overconcern with image, careerism, and misplaced loyalty as being typical in everyday military life. While these concerns may be somewhat overemphasized, they nevertheless exist to some extent. One cause is the changed role of today's military member in that the modern soldier must perform many technical jobs.

III. Data: This paper presents a conceptual leadership philosophy that has application in the current and future environment. Initially, the author establishes General Flynn's credentials for leading people in stressful environments—in training, in combat, in prison. Examination of the stressful prisoner of war (POW) environment enumerates factors which test his leadership philosophy. The presentation of General Flynn's leadership model, based on his many career experiences, yields a set of basic principles which were proven effective for stressful environments. The principles are: integrity, justice, compassion, loyalty, courage, and spirit. Since the military operates today in a stressful environment, General Flynn's philosophy should be applicable in the contemporary leadership setting. The author examines stress, leadership lessons derived from stressful situations, and the need for application of General Flynn's leadership principles to the contemporary peacetime leadership environment. A major concern is that organizational stress accelerates moral weakness. These deficiencies—failures in integrity,

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## CONTINUED

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misplaced loyalty, overconcern with image, and careerism--can be countered with the application of ethical principles of leadership as presented by General Elwyn.

iii. Leadership: General Elwyn's philosophy of leadership offers a concrete rationale to serve as a guide when leaders are confronted with organizational stress. Our moral failures, along with our lack of personal integrity, could, if not corrected, destroy the effectiveness of the national military establishment as a fighting force.

iv. Recommendations: We need to guard against unhealthy critical situations. General Elwyn's leadership philosophy is worthy of study by contemporary military members.

## Chapter Three

### A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AS VISUALIZED BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN P. FLYNN

#### OVERVIEW

The current moral and ethical attitudes in our country are marked by an attitude of confusion (3:v). Confusion also exists in the Air Force regarding moral and ethical decisions. This confusion is based on the fact that our high technology environment has depersonalized absolute right and wrong to the point that decisions, in a moral sense, are hazy. Regardless of the career specialty to which a person has been assigned in the Air Force, he or she has the moral responsibility of thinking correctly about matters of right and wrong. In this chapter, General Flynn offers a frank, honest, and constructive set of principles that provide solutions to many moral and ethical problems facing today's leaders. Presented in the form of a leadership model, he discusses the attributes of: integrity, justice, compassion, loyalty, courage, and spirit. This conceptual model was inspired by his many recent experiences and forms an "approach" for leaders operating in present and future stressful environments. It is a discussion which will assist leaders in developing a proper attitude toward ethical issues. The narrative was written based on General Flynn's lectures on the subject of moral and ethical issues delivered on 19 Sep 84 (33:--), and 18 Oct 84 (34:--) at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. The text was supplemented with additional information gained during personal interviews conducted on 19 Sep 84 (30:--), 28 Sep 84 (31:--), and 30 Sep 84 (32:--). The text which appears in this chapter represents General Flynn's thoughts and was edited by him on 5 Feb 85. It emphasizes the central theme that effective leaders must keep themselves beyond reproach. In addition, General Flynn states that leadership is marked by the strength or weakness of one's will to continually choose higher moral values when the moral values are in conflict.

#### GENERAL FLYNN'S LEADERSHIP MODEL

Some military members believe that effective leadership can be guaranteed by emulating the symbols of previous successful leaders. In the course of their careers, they have observed a number of successful leaders, officers whose reputations have been built on a reputation of their own personalities--effective, energetic, and often out of place, at the time, personal routines, and the common right to force to diminish the leadership style and image of the military leader's values. Unfortunately, these people naively believe that the mere emulation of the symbols of great leaders is sufficient to guarantee that they will be successful in the future. They

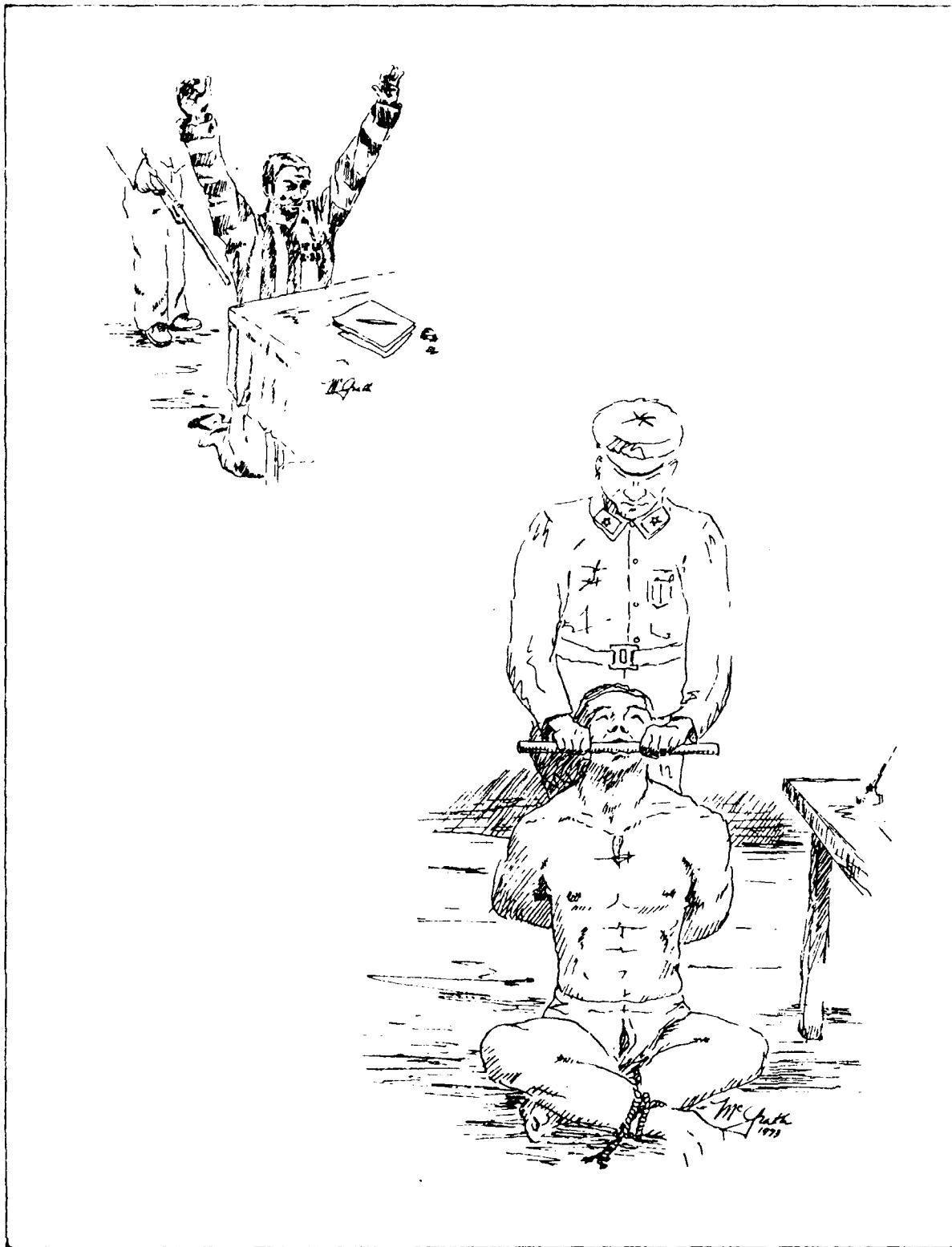


Figure 2. Prisoner of War Treatment (11:28,30)

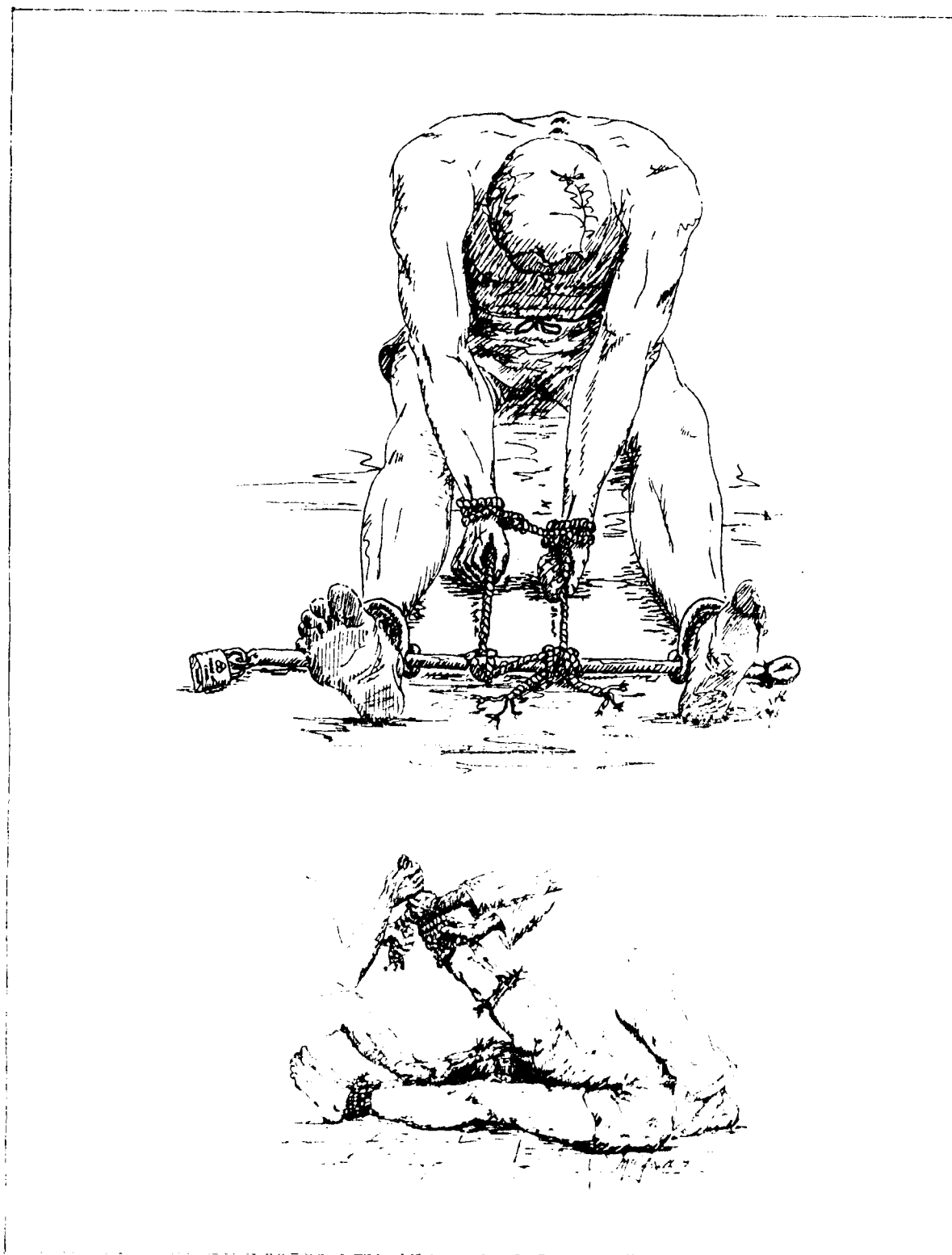


Figure 1. Prisoner of War Treatment (11:26, 30)

## SUMMARY

The POW experience was a stressful environment and offered a challenge to even the most dynamic forms of leadership. The prison environment was designed to extract military information and then to prostitute the prisoners for propaganda purposes. The North Vietnamese maintained a punishing environment because they believed that American prisoners were war criminals. The first technique they used against the prisoners was "hard torture." This type of torture is best described as physical abuse to the point where a captive would do something which under normal circumstances would be considered immoral. This treatment was marked by vague promises of early release, better food, better accommodations, communal living in return for "information." The second tactic which was used against the prisoners was isolation. The third tactic was fostering the environment of constant threat in which there was no semblance of routine or order. This stress-filled environment was met by a special style of dedication and leadership. First, the prisoners had to develop an unchallengeable individual integrity. Each prisoner met their captors alone, and had to be able to rely on whatever was codified internally to make it through the ordeal. The second "support system" was the Code of the U.S. Fighting Force or Military Code of Conduct. The code provided a moral and ethical reference point. The third support was derived from the communications system--a matrix of letters which formed a tap code similar to Morse Code--which became extremely sophisticated and the vital element to survival. Chapter Three will examine an approach to leadership developed in this stress-producing environment that proved effective for maintaining unit cohesion.

an officer training school for them. One of the trio later became a pilot (12:26). Shortly after their return, when news became known that Colonel Flynn had conferred commissions on the three enlisted NCOs while they were in captivity, the Air Force asserted that Colonel Flynn lacked the authority to make the promotions. However, Secretary of the Air Force Robert C. Seamans, Jr. overrode that decision and confirmed the promotions of the three sergeants on 6 April 1973 (35:--). Six of the POWs became general officers. Named for promotion to brigadier general were Air Force colonels, John P. Flynn, Robinson Risner, Norman C. Gaddis, and David W. Winn. Selected for promotion to rear admiral were two Navy captains, Jeremiah A. Denton and James B. Stockdale. The two Air Force officers had been selected while they were still prisoners, but the promotions had been kept secret because "to flag an individual in that way while he was captive might not be in his best interest" (8:53).

General Flynn also hastily returned to work. Among the chores he and other senior prisoners of war had to accomplish after their return was the writing of some 1,800 officer effectiveness reports (OERs) on Air Force personnel and several hundred more on Navy returnees. They also submitted more than 2,400 awards and decorations. "We told them they would be properly awarded and decorated for their participation in the Battle of Hanoi" (37:18). The senior POWs were committed to this action "so that when you look at one of our performance folders, our performance folders look just the same as your performance folders would, should you be on active duty, in that the man's entire track record is there" (37:19).

Each time a year elapsed or when rating officers changed, which was quite common over there because the Vietnamese were always moving people around to keep the situation confused and to bust up our organization, it required another OER just like in normal duty. All were written retroactively and I endorsed nearly every one.

We had no notes to refer to only memories and an incredible amount of telephone calls. If we had a question on an OER, we would have to telephonically check with the seniors who were in the chain of command.

[Note: Not all the ratings were outstanding.] One of our problems was that our people, having been in prison so long, were using the pre-shutdown concept of rating which did not include firewalling. That put more turbulence in the system, and we were mailing OERs back and forth, trying to crank in Kentucky windage.

I don't know how many transactions there were in finalizing 1,800 Air Force OERs, but they routinely had to go from the personnel center to the rater who accomplished the report in draft form. They were then returned to the project officer in the personnel center for quality control and final typing. The report was then returned to the rater for signature. The same process had to be then completed for the indorser. Finally, the report was reviewed and indorsed by me. We realized that there would be some personality conflicts and perhaps harbored resentments as a result of the prison experience, and so we effected a very liberal policy about challenging OERs. I acted as the court of last resort. If a guy wanted to challenge his rating, he darned well could. (12:27)

to eight words a minute (19:18). The senior leadership named the organization the 4th Allied Prisoner of War Wing. The seniors picked this designation because this was the fourth war in which servicemen of the United States were held captive along with allied prisoners. In this case, the allies were the three Thais and one South Vietnamese officer. The wing motto was: "Return with Honor." It turned out to be an appropriate choice of words because the President was similarly saying at the time, "Peace with Honor" (37:10-12).

After his return, General Flynn commented about prison life and his fellow prisoners:

They were a random selection of officers and airmen. Our victories and our defeats are really representative of the training and standards in the services today. I can cheerfully report that we had mostly victories, so this says that the average serviceman is a pretty good man and our standards are pretty high. (12:26)

He has also remarked about the fact that the prison experience "brought out and magnified an individual's strengths and weaknesses" (12:28). As it turned out, the prisoners in prison did not always present a united front, a few opposed the war and defied the authority of their seniors in the name of "conscience" (21:38). This situation posed the ultimate challenge to leadership. General Flynn points out that if a person was self-centered, and considered his own interests, the stress environment made him even more egocentric. Conversely, if he was truly an outstanding person, he would "show his colors" in a valiant manner. General Flynn stated, "It's like a scenario where you take a group of routine characters and you throw them on a desert island. Pretty soon their true characteristics emerge. That's precisely what happened in Hanoi" (12:28). General Flynn went on, "what we learned over there was a reaffirmation of the ethics of leadership--integrity, justice, loyalty, compassion. That's what came out of Hanoi" (12:28). This reassessment of values which was to be the by-product of the POW experience, can be stated simply in terms of faith, "Faith in God, faith in country, and faith in your fellows" (37:20; 27:31). General Flynn further explains their faith:

We were pulling duty 24 hours a day. It was probably the greatest challenge there is from the standpoint of faith in service and nation. As a result of it all, most of the POWs are super hawks who really understand national values. You can't live in a Communist country for a long time and not really understand the evils of that system. (12:26)

#### RETURN TO NORMAL DUTY

The people who planned Project Homecoming did not know what to expect as the longest war in U.S. history and the longest period of captivity for its prisoners of war came to an end (12:26). Most of the Air Force returnees were anxious to get back to their normal jobs. Of the 325 "blue-suiters," only 64 left active duty shortly after repatriation. Most of the remaining 261 former POWs had returned to flying jobs as of 31 March 1976. Nine Air Force enlisted prisoners returned from Hanoi. Three who had been in captivity for more than seven years had been commissioned by the senior leadership who had conducted

is not the same when they are after you for propaganda. In propaganda when they are torturing you, you have that certain knowledge...[that] you can call off the game anytime you want. (37:33; 31:--)

In most cases, prisoners signed statements or made tape recordings later played over Radio Hanoi. As James A. Mulligan put it at a news conference at Portsmouth, Virginia, "I've been broken. I think everyone here has been broken. We went through agony over and over again" (19:18). The prison experience prompted some of the returnees to speak of the new insight into themselves that they had gained while in captivity (19:18). Lt Col John Dunn said that he had been stunned into realizing his own limitations: "I found myself doing things I thought I never would, like making statements against my country" (19:18). But he found out that his captors were far more "clever" than he had estimated. He further stated, most of the prisoners would have preferred to have faced a firing squad than submit to the "continuous high level of pain" inflicted on them (19:18). Commander Alvarez said he had finally capitulated when he decided it "wasn't worth dying for," but later he felt remorse and wished he had died (19:18). One former prisoner of war charged that some men had been subject to homosexual attacks along with the beatings. "There are a lot of queers in that society," (19:18) said Lt Col Leo K. Thorsness at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. "Many of these people enjoyed their job and did it more thoroughly than necessary" (19: 18).

#### THE PRISONER OF WAR CREED

To cope with these aspects of the brutal environment, the senior leadership of the POW camp realized the need for all of the POWs to present a unified stance. To do this, they needed to develop some very basic and clear positions. The positions became a creed. They realized that this creed needed to be uncomplicated, it needed to be strong, it must never change, and it must be easily remembered (4:182). Although relatively simple in concept, the creed that they developed provided much needed strength for prisoners to endure harassment, torture, duress, and loneliness. The creed was as follows:

(1) We were fighting the common enemy of freedom--international Communism. (2) We were fulfilling our duty to our country. (3) We were sure the American people were behind us. (4) We believed that God would bring us out of prison--better for the stay. (4:185)

#### CHALLENGES TO LEADERSHIP

What evolved within prison was a very sophisticated organization within the prison. There was a command section composed of all the senior officers, a headquarters group, an alternate headquarters group, and staff positions all the way down to squadron level. All instructions and regulations were passed in coded notes (11:24; 26:29). The wing conformed strictly to military procedures and leaders controlled many aspects of prison life. From the early days of captivity, the prisoners tried to communicate with each other by tapping on the walls or flashing hand signals when they had the rare chance to see each other. When the system was working, the prisoners could transmit six

It was the question of torture that dominated the news conferences. For example, Colonel Risner reported that he had been "tied so tightly into a ball that his shoulders popped out of their sockets and his toes were pushed against his mouth" (19:18). On other occasions he said that "an iron bar was lashed to his ankles, where it gradually bit into his flesh" (19:18). He described the following as being typical of the treatment:

It was just beginning to turn dark when the cell door opened and several guards rushed in.... While I was still in the stocks, they forced me over on my side cutting my legs. They had some rough rope with which they started tying my arms behind me. They yanked them as tight as two men can pull.... My right shoulder began to slip out of its socket. With a slight pop it felt as if it came out.... [Blindfolded] they led me outside to the courtyard. ...Then we went through some open drainage ditches. It seemed as if half of the time I was getting up from falling.... I was getting banged up pretty good. Horses had thrown, pawed, and kicked me. I had concussions and broken bones. The worse they treated me, the greater my determination not to talk. (4:92-93)

Lieutenant Commander Everett Alvarez, the first American pilot shot down over North Vietnam, stated that he had not been tortured for the first two years of his captivity, but in mid-1966 he was made to sit on a stool for four or five days, with no sleep or food (19:18). Others stated that they had been shackled to their bunks and forced to wallow in their own waste for weeks at a time (19:18).

Navy Commander John M. McGrath reported, "when we returned to the United States, we used the words shackles, stocks, manacles, and irons; yet many could not, or would not, picture what the words meant" (11:27). He complained of being unable to adequately describe the actual hardness of the conditions under which they had lived:

...the dimly lit rooms, and claustrophobic-inducing cells; the lack of adequate food, which combined with filth, caused disease and indescribable discomfort. It is difficult to sketch a vitamin and protein deficiency that results in beri-beri; and no picture can convey the impact of plagues of lice, heat rash, biting bed bugs, mosquitoes, cockroaches, and rats. Add to this the hostility and brutality of the guards, who had been taught from childhood to hate Americans, and the sum total was an unbelievable existence for hundreds of American fighting men who somehow survived the ordeal. (11:27)

On the subject of torture, General Flynn has responded:

Many of us were tortured to the point where we fainted several times, three or four times perhaps, ...[during] the initial military interrogation... It was a frightening experience. When you are tortured for military information, you can get in a position where they are testing you for the truth. You may not know the truth, [but] they have to torture you beyond your limits to where you faint...before they are satisfied you are telling the truth. It

going home underwent a change from expressionless prisoners to animated and excited American officers not long after their release from Ly Nam De, the camp known generally as the Hanoi Hilton and referred to by North Vietnamese officials as "the last point of detention for captured personnel" (24:4). Colonel John P. Flynn, as the prisoners' commander, wanted to stay until the final group was out, but North Vietnamese officials said that all prisoners must be released on the basis of date of capture (24:4). On arrival at Clark Air Base, Colonel Flynn stated to the crowd of cheering onlookers:

This is a very exciting moment for all of us here. I'd just like to say simply that as a group we have been privileged to serve our country under very difficult circumstances. I would also like to thank our President, the services, the people of the United States for their support and efforts, and lives that were expended in our behalf.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the courage and the integrity of our President. We knew that he must have been faced with many, many tough decisions and circumstances, such as bombing Hanoi. He had our support and our prayers always.

We knew about the efforts of millions of American people. We knew about the bumper stickers. We knew about the silences at the football games. We knew about the buttons on the lapels. It sustained us. It had a tremendous impact on our morale. We never lost faith in our country.

Finally, I would like to say that I have been in better places but I have never been with better people. Our men performed magnificently. They were first-class soldiers. They were first-class citizens and they asked me to thank you for your support and say God Bless all of you. (24:4)

#### PRISON CONDITIONS

The process of returning the American POWs took several weeks. The last 67 prisoners flew out of Hanoi to freedom on 30 March 1973 (6:1). Until this time, returning POWs had been silent about prison conditions and their treatment, fearing that publicity would jeopardize release of those remaining in Vietnam. With the release of the final group, the "news blackout" was lifted. In hastily arranged news conferences across the country, former prisoners of war told chilling stories of mental and physical torture. The returnees reported that they had been "beaten, tied, shackled, and starved until they provided information about American war plans or signed antiwar statements and confessions of war crimes" (19:1). But to many of the men, the most devastating treatment were the periods of solitary confinement. As Colonel Robinson Risner said at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, "Can you imagine someone putting you in a closet and closing the door and saying, 'See you in six months'?" (19:1)

Men captured in North Vietnam were usually incarcerated in old French prisons and often spent years in the same cell. Prisoners taken in South Vietnam lived primarily in jungle camps and moved constantly. These southern prisoners were seldom able to organize or communicate among themselves, usually because they were smaller in number and were more closely watched (5:--; 21:1,38).

- Army Staff Sergeant David Harker  
Returning Prisoner of War

I would like to borrow three words from the late Douglas MacArthur to express my feelings on this, my greatest day: duty, honor, country.

- Air Force Captain Leroy Stutz  
Returning Prisoner of War

Our emotions at this time are indescribable. To be back on American soil has been our dream, our prayer for over seven years. You have reached across time and space and brought us home. Thank you, America. Thank you, Mr. President. May God bless you all.

- Air Force Colonel Ronald E. Byrne, Jr.  
Returning Prisoner of War

It's more fitting that we salute you, the people. We will stand by the people should they or the President ever need us again. And God bless you all.

- Air Force Colonel John P. Flynn  
Returning Prisoner of War

Such were the sentiments expressed across the United States as former POWs stepped onto home soil. Although many Americans were skeptical of the "victory" in Vietnam, the men came home as heroes exemplifying the character and spirit that has made America a great nation. With curiosity, the American public waited for the POWs to relate their experiences. This would have to wait, however, until the entire group was released.

The release of POWs was a painstakingly slow process. The first and second release had been given a lot of media attention. The third phase of American prisoner of war releases began on 14 March 1973 in Hanoi, North Vietnam. Among the prisoners released that day was Colonel John P. Flynn of the Air Force, then 50 years old, who was the senior-ranking captured American. He was shot down on 27 October 1967, and performed duties as the commander of the prisoners in North Vietnam (23:3). As in previous releases, the scene was filled with suspense and excitement. A United States military advance team arrived in Hanoi from Clark Air Base at 10:57 AM. The first planeload of 40 repatriated prisoners took off from Hanoi's Gia Lam Airfield at 1:30 PM enroute to Clark Air Force Base. Two more planeloads of prisoners followed--in total, 108 prisoners departed aboard the C-141 Starlifter medical evacuation jets. The release left 178 Americans and one Canadian in captivity according to lists supplied by the Vietnamese Communists. The Vietcong were scheduled to release 32 more Americans the next day. The remaining 147 of the prisoners captured in North and South Vietnam and Laos were to be released by 28 March under the cease fire agreement reached on 27 January by the United States and North Vietnam (24:4).

The military men released on 14 March were all Air Force, Navy, and Marine officers and fliers. All but one were shot down and captured in 1967 and 1968; the one exception was downed in December 1971. The men who were

## Chapter Two

### THE PRISONER OF WAR EXPERIENCE

#### OVERVIEW

This chapter will examine the prisoner of war (POW) experience in Southeast Asia as told by those who experienced it. The chapter will begin with a discussion of the events surrounding the POW return to the United States. With the homecoming arrangements as a prologue, the reader will then be exposed to a description of prison conditions, emergence of the POW creed used as a "support system," and resultant challenges to leadership. The chapter concludes by discussing the acculturation associated with return to normal duty. The reader will learn that what emerged from this environment of torture, isolation, and constant threat was an understanding of the need for unchallengeable integrity, moral and ethical principles, and the ability to communicate. The chapter is a vital portion of this paper because it establishes the existence of the stressful environment which tested General Flynn's leadership concepts. The concepts will be presented in a subsequent chapter.

#### HOMECOMING

The events of March 1973 that dominated the news in the United States included the high cost of meat, the war on inflation, Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy, the President's "executive privilege" to shield White House aides from testifying about the Watergate case, violations of the Vietnam peace agreement by Hanoi, and the slow release of American POWs from North Vietnam. The nation was weary. Amid all of her problems, America was ready for "a needed tonic" as Time magazine so aptly phrased it (14:19). For many Americans the coverage of the return of the POWs was "an affirmation of faith in a nation that had grown accustomed to self-reproach" (14:19). The words of several returning POWs illustrate the results of effective leadership (4:19; 15:6).

We have reaped the fruits of our faith and trust in our God, our Commander in Chief, our families and all the people of this wonderful, wonderful country. America, we love you.

Major General Frederick Crow  
Returning Prisoner of War

Happiness is returning to the United States, where everybody's heart is full of gold the size of the Empire State Building.

The second document is a previously unpublished account of taped remarks recorded during General Flynn's discussion of his prisoner of war experience at the 1979 USAF Chaplain Conference, Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado. The third document, is a transcript of General Flynn's farewell remarks as the Air Force Inspector General prior to his retirement. Each document provides further insight into the man and his dedication to the military profession. This dedication and insight, based on his experiences of war, make him worthy of study as an airpower pioneer.

classroom discussions of the challenges, opportunities, and problems of leading men and women in today's Air Force, I learned that General Flynn was to speak to the class on the subject of "Military Professionalism." I wondered if he would be as inspiring as I had remembered him to be. I had been following his career for years in the news media and I feared that possibly I had built him up in my mind to such an extent, that he could never live up to my expectations. My fears were quickly put to rest. Once again, General Flynn captured my spirit and rekindled my enthusiasm. As he spoke, I was struck by the notion of how dangerously unprepared my generation of career officers is for the rigors of combat. I also mused that the realities of war are among the most disagreeable aspects of military service that we are ever called upon to face--facts that are seldom discussed. In fact, it is very seldom that we think about our real business: the conduct of war. To this end, General Flynn offered an "approach" for the military professional to combat the complicated and disagreeable realities of war. I felt there was no better person to speak on the subject than a person who had experienced it first hand. When his lecture was over, I shyly went backstage to thank him, wanting to tell him how he had once again influenced me. I told him I had first heard him many years earlier and that I had found his words on the ethics of military leadership to be as appropriate and meaningful today as they were then. We spent the next thirty minutes talking about challenges to effective leadership and he explained his "hierarchy of needs" theory. We have spoken several times since, and what has evolved is a unique philosophy of leadership--a leadership approach which was influenced by his years in captivity and his unusual perspective as the senior American POW in Vietnam.

This paper attempts to answer the question: "What conceptual leadership model will best assist officers in meeting the future challenges of Air Force leadership?" To achieve this, I will present a conceptual leadership philosophy that has application in the current and future Air Force environment. This philosophy was designed by General Flynn based upon his extremely stressful experience as a POW. In Chapter 2, I will describe the POW experience and show how it contributed to General Flynn's leadership philosophy. It is not my intention to describe the atrocities of prison life or analyze the brutality of the interrogation techniques employed against the POWs. Rather, I intend to provide a glimpse of the confusion which was typical of the POW experience so that the reader understands the rationale behind prisoners' behavior. General Flynn's conceptual approach to leadership is set forth in Chapter 3. It illustrates General Flynn's thoughts expressed during lectures and interview discussions. The reader will note that General Flynn's remarks are heavily influenced by his POW experience and provide a unique example of leadership under combat stress. Finally, Chapter 4 will attempt to illustrate the applicability of General Flynn's philosophy to the contemporary Air Force by showing that there is a relationship between stress in combat and organizational stress. By illustrating this relationship, it should be clear that the leadership principles expressed by General Flynn in captivity are appropriate for the environment encountered by contemporary Air Force leadership.

This paper is based on research and several interviews with General Flynn and includes his thoughts on such subjects as morals, ethics, characteristics of effective leadership, careerism, and his POW experience. As a side note, I have included in the appendix three documents I feel add substance to the paper. The first document is an updated military biography of General Flynn.

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION: LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN P. FLYNN

In the early months of 1976, while I was a student at Squadron Officers School, at Maxwell Air Force Base, I heard Lieutenant General John P. Flynn speak about his prisoner of war experiences from the stage in Polifka Auditorium. I remember his speech well and particularly remember how impressed I was with his exuberant pride, patriotism, and dignity as he told us of his prisoner of war (POW) experiences in North Vietnam. After his lecture, my thoughts focused on the search for peace, and on the heroic sacrifice of those who were detained by the North Vietnamese. Their sacrifice clearly demonstrated that the price of freedom can be dear. He made me proud to be an American and especially a member of the Air Force.

General Flynn has had a distinguished career that covers three decades and three wars. His first combat experience was in Italy, flying the P-51 Mustang. Following World War II, he earned a spot on the Air Force's first aerial demonstration team, the predecessor of today's Thunderbirds. He entered combat during the first week of the Korean War, flying P-80s, and pioneered new tactics that altered the course of fighter combat. During the Lebanon Crisis in 1958, General Flynn had the distinction of being on the first aircraft into the country and the last Air Force person to be withdrawn. During the conflict in Southeast Asia, he flew F-105s from Korat Air Base in Thailand. In late October 1967, his F-105 was shot down over North Vietnam, and for the next 65 months he was a POW. After his release from captivity in North Vietnam, General Flynn returned to the United States and served as Commandant of the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, then as Commander of the Air Force Military Training Center at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. He completed his career with a tour of duty as The Inspector General of the Air Force, and retired in 1978 as a lieutenant general.

During his 1976 lecture at Squadron Officers School, General Flynn analyzed the military code of conduct based on his POW experience. He spoke with authority having survived the despair and futility of prison life. For many of us it was our first exposure to the code. He recited the sixth article of the code: "I will never forget that I am an American fighting man, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free" (28:14). I carried those words with me for years, almost as if they were my personal credo. I believe they mandate a special charge to members serving in the armed forces--a charge which epitomizes the leadership philosophy of General Flynn. We who wear the uniform today are custodians of the honorable legacy bequeathed by those such as General Flynn.

Nearly nine years have passed since that afternoon. In August 1984, I was assigned as a student at Air Command and Staff College. Amid our early

supervise. If this were true, donning a leather jacket would insure the success of Dwight Eisenhower, or carrying a helmet and riding crop could evoke George Patton's style. These are descriptions of symbols, and are often confused with personality traits. The truth is that each of the many great leaders in history were successful not because of their symbols, but because their personality traits were situationally effective. Therefore, the effective leader must not merely copy symbols but tailor his or her style on situational factors. In short, leaders need to possess appropriate personality qualities rather than symbols.

In this regard, the "real person" is most often disguised, in that what is "seen" is not always representative of a person's true nature or stature. Particularly in today's society, with the advent of many personal external products. Once a person is stripped of his or her external disguises the true person begins to emerge. Taking this line of reasoning one step further and adding the additional input of stress, what emerges is a more accurate portrait of a person's makeup. The best way to see the "real person" is to place that person under stress. That's the stuff that fictional or factual novels and movies are made of and we never tire of reading or seeing them.

Leadership under stress creates challenges for the military professional. The presentation on leadership will be discussed by addressing General Flynn's thoughts on what he perceives to be the six ethical principles that have had the deepest impact on his career. Combined, these principles can be used as a leadership guide for the military professional. These principles are the criteria by which soldiers have lived and fought, and some have died trying to uphold--they have stood the test of time. General Flynn's military experiences, influenced by his Vietnam prisoner of war episode, have influenced his thoughts on leadership. The principles which emerge are: integrity, justice, compassion, loyalty, courage, and spirit. These principles are not to be considered the answer to every situation a military officer may encounter in his or her career, but they can be used as a set of principles to which one may try to aspire, both on duty and after duty. These ideals will not be found in any regulations or checklists, and certainly, they may not be appropriate in every situation. However, they do represent a spirit, a direction, and an attitude which may be of assistance to the future challenges to leadership.

Before discussing the six principles listed above, a distinction between the term "ethics" and "morals" must be made. Very often, people confuse the two terms. General Flynn believes that "ethical" implies conformity with an ideal code of principles, often associated with the code of a particular profession. These principles are long term. "Moral" implies conformity with the generally accepted standards of goodness or rightness in conduct or character. Morals, therefore, are associated with the short term and are almost always changing. We often see morals codified into public law. For example, in 1934 men were arrested for wearing topless bathing suits. This, then, was a moral rather than an ethical issue. Although insignificant by today's standards, this example shows how moral issues are important in the lives of all human beings.

In a democratic society, clear thinking about moral issues is the obligation of every citizen. Officers cannot be satisfied with following custom or authority blindly, but must be able to think for themselves on

matters of right and wrong. The effective leader should certainly be a moral person, but one must be careful that he or she doesn't try to force his or her standards of morality on others. This is particularly important if an officer represents an extreme viewpoint on either end of the scale. Let's then look at the principles which should guide our leadership.

### Integrity

During the long periods of isolation, the prisoner of war had a lot of time to think about things--particularly personal values and those things which were held in the highest esteem. General Flynn believes that integrity is the highest ethical characteristic of an effective leader. In 1983, the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Charles A. Gabriel discussed the subject of integrity. He stated:

When responsible, dedicated people are joined together by lofty goals, they expect and demand integrity. Integrity is the fundamental premise of military service in a free society. Without integrity the moral pillars of our military strength--public trust and self-respect--are lost.

Integrity demands of each individual the highest standards of personal and professional honesty, and an unfaltering devotion to duty. It is rarely the easy way. Integrity is constantly assailed by selfseekers [sic], appeasers, and shirkers. Resist them all. You, the Air Force, and the Country will be the better for your resistance. (32:--)

"Integrity" declared General David Jones,

is certainly not a unique military attribute, but the stakes are higher in our business than in any other. We must be right, we must be competent, we must admit our mistakes and correct them when they do occur, and, above all, we must never permit either the fact or the image of duplicity to taint our honor. The watchword must be, as always, 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' (32:--)

General Flynn agrees with these two gentlemen when they state that integrity is marked by ethical soundness, honesty, and uprightness. "Trust," "respect," "truth," "honesty," and "devotion," are the words most often heard associated with integrity.

However, General Flynn believes integrity is really composed of two additional elements. The first element can be addressed by considering the following thought. "In everything that a person does, one has to first consider or determine what is truly right and what is truly wrong" (33:--; 34:--). Usually it is fairly easy to do that, but if one needs help in his or her decision, just pretend that whatever problem you are wrestling with, you are going to read about in the newspaper the following morning. Often that is a chilling thought, but it may help with the decision! The second element of integrity is where many officers often have difficulty. That is, "A leader must support that which is right and oppose that which is wrong, even though it might involve risk of life, or limb, or upward mobility in his or her

career" (30:--). A man has integrity if he holds himself to a course of action because of a conviction that it is in the general interest, even though he is aware that this conviction may ultimately lead to inconvenience, personal loss, humiliation, or grave physical risk. But, knowing that this course of action is the correct or right thing to do, he or she proceeds. Therein lies the tough decision which many officers will be faced with from time to time in their careers regardless of their Air Force specialty. General Flynn is quick to point out, the more rank an individual achieves, the tougher the challenges become.

A person is not born with integrity. Rather, one learns integrity by being sensitized to its importance and to the incredible dilemmas that occur if its consequences are forgotten or ignored. There are literally hundreds of stories of respected senior officers in the Air Force who have at one time or another been in serious circumstances on the issue of integrity. It is almost an occupational hazard! Therefore, the effective leader must be sensitive to the subject. Officers must regularly think of things in terms of integrity. Make the judgement as to the "correctness" of an issue, and then follow through on that decision. General Flynn often states that an officer displays integrity if he or she decides on the same course of action when not observed by others as he or she would follow if surrounded by performance report rating and endorsing officials.

The best officer effectiveness report General Flynn ever received was while he was flying F-80s in the Korean War. The evaluation was written by a West Point colonel. The colonel wrote: "This man is forthright and outspoken, but not to the point that I have had to court martial him" (33:--). Incidentally, he accompanied that remark with a superior rating. General Flynn is particularly proud of that comment because it indicates the type of integrity that he has tried to foster throughout his career. Officers will find, that this philosophy works; however, don't go slap your boss in the face as General Flynn apparently did with his youthful zeal. Fortunately, in this case his boss was a very experienced, ethical leader.

### Justice

The next principle is the ethic of justice. How often have you heard a person say: "I'll work for that man, he's hard but fair." That perception evolves among subordinates only through effective use of justice. Military leaders are responsible for motivating, challenging, and sometimes reprimanding the people they supervise. In short, leadership is the art of persuading people to behave in a manner which supports the mission. The ultimate object of leadership is to effect behavioral changes in people. If a person does something wrong in your unit, the effective leader should avoid the "fair trial and quick judgement" that the "hanging judges" were notorious for doing in the days of the old West. Regardless of how close a person may be to a given situation, one may not know all of the factors involved in a particular problem. In fairness to the subordinate, he should be given an opportunity to express his feelings and any facts related to the incident that have not been addressed. As a leader, an officer must be completely reasonable and open-minded. When a person's reputation is at stake, it is mandatory that he or she be allowed every opportunity to defend his or her reputation. Any hint of prejudgment on the superior's part will negate any

advantages or tangible benefits that may come from the discussion. First impressions based on insufficient facts can result in very unfair solutions. If counseling does not work, it is appropriate to take disciplinary action quickly and fairly. Make certain the punishment matches the misconduct--but above all be consistent.

There is an incredible amount of destruction caused by injustice. Many examples come to mind. Think of all of the officers that were fragged in Vietnam because they were perceived by their troops as being unjust. Public opinion in this country rallies behind many causes solely on the grounds of an act being unjust. Take, for example, the air traffic controllers strike in the United States. There was little sympathy among many Americans for their complaints because most people perceived the controllers tactics to be disruptive and therefore unjust. Similarly, the hostages in Iran were thought to be the victims of injustice. Our nation was ready to go to war over the incident. Another aspect of justice which has always puzzled General Flynn, is the shameful attitude that has developed within the military toward "whistleblowers." In this regard, a "whistleblower" should not be held up to ridicule and censured because he or she identifies an item of fraud, waste, or outright abuse, and has the courage to stand up before Congress and tell the truth. Someday, hopefully in the current generation, officers will establish an attitude that "whistleblowers" will not be looked down upon--rather they will be doing what is expected and they will be regarded as acting with dignity, integrity, and concern for justice.

So far, General Flynn has presented justice in somewhat negative terms, that is, with regard to the unjust treatment of another person, or in terms of a violation of a person's rights. There is, however, a positive side to justice. A leader is responsible for rewarding subordinates who do something well or right. Therefore, an effective technique is to recognize good performance publicly. If someone is to receive an award, the base theater is not too big a forum in which to give it. If possible, when you complement someone, do it in front of his or her peers. The "well done" and "pat on the back" are probably one of the most important, most available, and least expensive tools available to a leader for motivating people and it is the key to increased productivity and mission effectiveness.

### Compassion

Many military members do very poorly with the ethic of compassion because, unfortunately, they get it confused with justice. Sometimes out of compassion people do some things which really work very strongly against justice. One of the most dreaded situations with which General Flynn ever became involved concerned an Air Force lieutenant colonel, with nineteen and a half years service, who was found guilty of molesting a child in a men's rest room. A board of officers met to decide on the fate of his case. Despite the fact that in this situation the officer was clearly guilty of wrongdoing, they decided in his favor. Their decision to retain the individual in the service until retirement was based on the fact that he had an impeccable performance record. He had accumulated nineteen and a half years service and they felt that his "good performance record" entitled him to be eligible to retire with full benefits. In General Flynn's opinion, that was the worst judgement that they could have made because in so doing they sent a message down through the

force that said, in effect--it's okay to molest a child in the men's room--provided that you are a lieutenant colonel, and have nineteen and a half years of service. That message is wrong! What they should have articulated was "guilty by God" of the molestation charge, and in mitigation thereof, the board has examined the circumstances, remanded him to psychiatric care, and allowed him to retire. The difference is that the "message" that goes out to the troops is that the act was wrong, but within the ethic of compassion the circumstances were examined and a decision made in his favor.

The best witness to further explain the conflict between justice and compassion is reflected by President Nixon and his actions regarding Watergate. General Flynn has had three personal conversations with President Nixon and is forthright in saying that most ex-POWs think of him as a great man because he got the POWs out of prison. Nevertheless, President Nixon made a statement to the press which was so unintelligible that few people understood what he was saying. A person had to literally search through the words to understand his real meaning. He said: "I made a mistake. I was using my heart instead of my head. You always have to use your head first" (31:--). What General Flynn feels the President was really saying was that you have to think in terms of justice first by deciding what is right, and then separately in terms of compassion to consider the special circumstances of mitigation. The confusion between these two ethics, that is, confusing justice and compassion, ruined a man who had had an incredibly brilliant career and robbed him of his just place in history as one of the great American presidents. Officers must remember this when they are commanders. As commanders, they need to make the judgement call in terms of justice, and then separately decide the punishment with compassion.

### Loyalty

There are very few people in the military who choose not to be loyal. Loyalty is typified by sincere confidence in and support for one's associates, whether superior or subordinates. In the military profession, the ethic of loyalty is prized very highly. Loyalty means supporting your boss--his boss--his boss's boss. A person may not personally care for his or her boss, but he is your boss and that means one must support him. Loyalty is probably one of the most dangerous ethics we must adhere to because it begs the question--"Loyalty to whom, and to what?"

Consider for a moment the Prussian generals at the beginning of World War II. It was their custom each year to appear at Nuremberg and swear fealty to the nation. Unbeknown to the generals, Hitler, being an opportunist, had changed the wording of the oath so that instead of swearing allegiance to the nation, they swore fealty to the Fuehrer. The German chief of staff was the first general to take the oath and the other generals lined up behind him and obediently followed his lead. Later, while walking from the ceremony, they began to discuss it. The realization that they had given their blood oath to Hitler filled them with concern and apprehension. History now reveals fully the awful aftermath of that incredible error.

While a prisoner in North Vietnam, the POWs were always alone in their interrogation and torture. The North Vietnamese interrogators used to say, "You are alone. We don't want to hurt you. You are a nice guy, no one is

going to know that you gave us information" (33:--). But these were merely words to entice them into divulging information or gaining cooperation. The POWs knew that after their torture session was over, they had to return to their cell and check themselves against the code of conduct. With the code of conduct as an external reference, they devised a hierarchy of values as an additional reference.

The hierarchy proposed that in everything that the POWs did, they must in descending order first examine what is best for their GOD, what is best for the FREE WORLD, what is best for their NATION, what is best for their SERVICE, what is best for their ORGANIZATION, their FELLOWS, and finally THEMSELVES. Using this hierarchy of values as a crutch, individuals can assess any complex problem. A complex problem, such as whether or not to confront one's boss with an unpopular accusation, can be solved using this approach. If a person can satisfy this hierarchy, chances are that he or she is going to approach the boss because that person knows he or she is right in doing so. With the hierarchy as a reference, the decision to approach him is because, despite the sensitivity of the action, one knows that their SERVICE will demand it, or their NATION will demand it, depending on the situation.

This hierarchy of values is not completely original. Its value has been reinforced by great leaders who have created, lived by, and adhered to similar hierarchies as suggested below:

"Our country rooted in the belief of a Supreme Being and a law higher than our own" (30:--).

- President Ronald Reagan

"The safety, honor, and welfare of your Country comes first, always, and every time.... The honor, welfare, and comfort of your men come next.... Your own ease, comfort, and safety comes last--always and every time" (30:--).

- General George S. Patton

"Discipline was the soul of the Army [and public service]. Specifically, a means of constraining, subduing, and directing the power of an individual personality to the purposes of a hierarchy of organization and causes greater than oneself.... From Army to Party, ..from Party to Administration, to International Alliances, to the family of man--to each he had a loyalty in an ascending order" (30:--).

- General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Throughout General Flynn's career--in training, in combat, in prison--he has searched for an explanation of the "what" and "why" of failure. After much thought on the subject, he came to the realization that the answer was in the converse of the egocentric. If a man has a reverse order of priorities, that is, in everything that he does he will first consider what is best for HIMSELF, then his FELLOWS, his ORGANIZATION, and so forth--is it any wonder that this person caves in when confronted with a high stress situation? What else would one expect of the egocentric person. Since in his priorities he always places himself first, the likelihood that he will risk himself for someone else is extremely doubtful. Certainly, not if he can help it.

When General Flynn returned from his stay with the North Vietnamese, he felt so strongly about the problems with egocentric people, that he told the Air Force Surgeon General, "If you identify an egocentric man in training, I recommend that you never send him into combat and never put him in a position of high responsibility" (31:--). It is not surprising that senior leadership in the POW camp had problems with fellow prisoners who exhibited this quality because they were not the type to put their country first. They were, instead, worried solely about themselves and extremely selfish at the expense of the group. If one talks to an egocentric person, it readily becomes obvious that he will never allow himself to be pinned down and take a particular position. He will tell you one thing one time, and the next moment he will argue from a different reference point. Out of fear of becoming trapped, this person resorts to refusing to take a stand on anything for which he may later be held accountable. He is the alpha and the omega--with no other spatial reference other than himself.

### Courage

Courage is ascendancy over fear. The Air Force, and our Nation, can not be satisfied with officers whose courage is transitory, a flash of strength invoked for a brief moment only. Instead, officers are needed whose courage is steady and long-enduring. The POW experience is testimony to the need for men who can steel themselves for the long haul over the years. Members of the armed forces hold this ethic in extremely high esteem. The ethic of courage also infers courage of conviction. When discussing courage, General Flynn often talks about the British. There is an old poem by Rudyard Kipling about a "color sergeant", the title of which he cannot recall. In this poem the sergeant major shows a young recruit through his regiment for the first time. The young recruit pointed out a color sergeant and asked what was the color sergeant's job. The sergeant major replied that the color sergeant carried the flag. The recruit then pointed at the supply sergeant and asked what he did in the regiment. The sergeant major replied that the person was the supply sergeant, responsible for insuring that the regiment had clothing and equipment. Noticing another person, the young recruit asked what that person did. The sergeant major replied: "That's the second lieutenant, he'll teach you how to die" (33:--). That is precisely the tradition with the British, when they attacked, their officers were at the head of their platoons. Their casualty rate was incredible; however, their courage infused the entire command. It was a sense of honor and legendary courage that became synonymous with British arms.

Similarly today, the effective leader must be "out in front" of the group fostering an atmosphere where people want to excel. Do you think that a person can be a flying officer or a wing commander of a combat wing without flying over enemy territory himself? The leader must take his turn out in front leading the way. This demands a demonstration of courage on his part. Occasionally in the process people get hurt. If a person is the commander of a carrier air group, he must make carrier landings and lead strikes along with the others. Consequently, a leader must consider it his obligation to get out and discover the concerns of his officer, airmen, and civilian employees and insure they are fairly represented to his superiors. Being visible and available is also important. When people are working long and hard, the

effective leader must be doing the same. Loyalty, dedication, professionalism and esprit de corps are, in part, the result of the example set by those in leadership positions.

The American public admires courage in its leaders. How refreshing it was to view President Reagan's courage during the attempted assassination. Despite his own injury, he was first concerned with the others who had been shot. A newspaper journalist wrote, "A few minutes of terror, showed a man familiar with life's fragile nature--and its absurdities--a man apparently well armored against self pity, and determined to cling to something more than just his person--something we call duty. God knows if he really even understood it--but the world witnessed a courage rarely glimpsed in those who lead. (30:--)" Another correspondent wrote, "We have seen in this 70 year old former actor the sudden glint of the American people we have been, and which we think, we still may be! That quality often weighs more heavily in the balance of a Country's affairs than party platforms and promises. (30:--)"

### Spirit

Spirit is an ephemeral thing--easy to recognize but difficult to define. Enthusiastic interest in one's work is an extremely important attribute because it is contagious. When a person becomes enthusiastically involved in a project, the most commonplace job becomes interesting and productive. A lot of junior officers do not realize the fact that leadership is not always vested in rank. In every outfit that General Flynn has been in he has usually had five or six "underground leaders." These underground leaders were junior officers who actually shaped the destiny of the unit. Because of their persistence and creativity, they insured that the older guys did it right. This was especially true in the prolonged high stress situation in Hanoi. Juniors have and had a way of saying: "Lead or get the hell out of the way, sir! (32:--)"

General Flynn's favorite historical example of spirit is Admiral Nelson. Nelson was quite a character and may have had trouble qualifying in terms of morality. Despite his shortcomings (he drank too much alcohol and he had a mistress), his spirited style of leadership carried him through many a tight situation and earned him a deserved place in history. Once he was advised not to depart the harbor because the enemy was waiting outside of the harbor and was ready to attack. He placed his telescope up to his bad eye and not seeing any ships proceeded to depart the harbor. In the resulting sea battle, he was victorious. Similarly, at the Battle of Trafalgar, he was badly outnumbered by a formidable Spanish and French fleet. He called together his Admirals and plotted a fleet battle plan. The signals officer asked if he had a message for the fleet prior to battle. Allegedly, he responded: "England expects every man to do his duty" (33:--). The resultant battle lives in the annals of history as one of the greatest naval victories in history.

### Conclusion

When considering Nelson's contributions, General Flynn likes to think it was the man who stood behind that eight word motto who was really important. It was Nelson--the leader--who gave the words credibility and thus made the

words inspirational. This is true because, in his own way, Nelson was a man of great integrity--a just and compassionate leader. He also had unquestioned loyalty to the Crown, displayed great physical courage, and courage of conviction. He was a man of compelling spirit. That's why Nelson won the ultimate victory and changed history. That is why he joined that long list of leaders, including the greatest leader of them all, Jesus Christ.

Today's leaders need to nurture those same principles which have been the bedrock of our Nation's strength. This strength must be used prudently to preserve perhaps the greatest blessing of all: our political system. Without a doubt, that system, which is passed and entrusted to each generation of Americans by the previous one, is in safe hands.

#### SUMMARY

Leadership basics are vividly portrayed in the prison camp scenario. General Flynn's opinions on the subject of leadership under stress were developed over an entire career, and received profound testing in the stress and degradation of a Communist POW camp. What he has said is that leaders under pressure--when confronted with danger, fear, and confusion--must keep themselves absolutely clean morally. They must lead by example, must be able to implant high idealism in their followers, must have competence, and must have earned the respect of the others by demonstrating total integrity. Chapter 4 will present an application of this philosophy for future leadership.

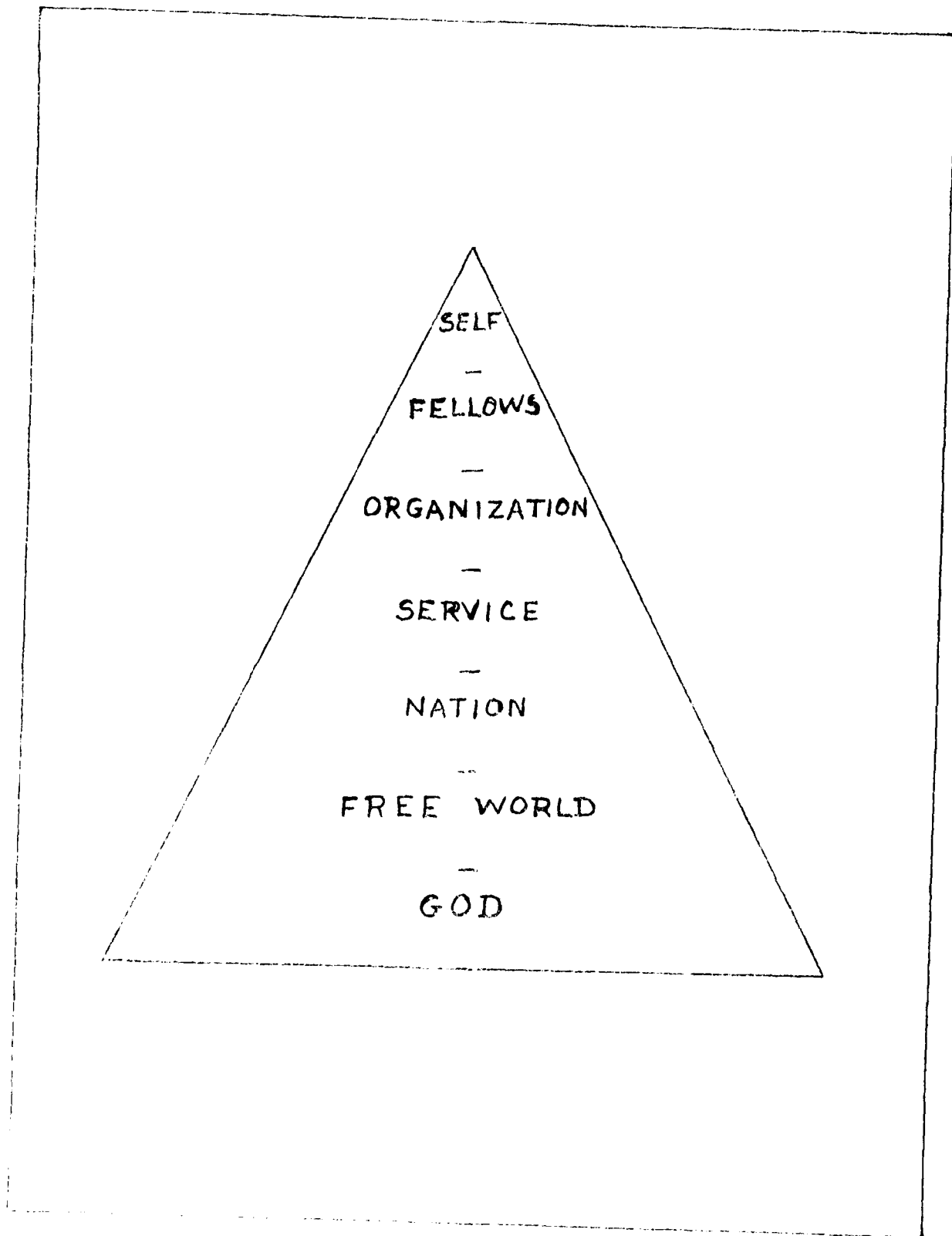


Figure 3. The Hierarchy of Values (30:---)

## Chapter Four

### THE CHALLENGES TO FUTURE LEADERSHIP

#### OVERVIEW

Chapter One introduced General Flynn and established his credentials for leading people in stressful environments—in training, in combat, in prison. Chapter Two focused on an examination of the stressful POW environment and enumerated factors which tested General Flynn's leadership philosophy. Chapter Three presented General Flynn's leadership philosophy based on his many career experiences. What has emerged is a set of basic leadership principles which were proven effective for stressful environments. Since the military operates today in a stressful organizational environment, General Flynn's philosophy should be applicable in the contemporary military setting. The purpose of this chapter is to relate General Flynn's leadership principles to the contemporary peacetime Air Force.

This chapter examines stress, leadership lessons derived from stressful situations, and the need for application of General Flynn's philosophy of leadership to the contemporary leadership environment. Initially the chapter will analyze the nature of organizational stress experienced in the contemporary military setting. A major concern in this discussion is that organizational stress accelerates potential for moral weakness. The second part of this chapter will present lessons learned about man's behavior under stress particularly regarding issues of moral integrity. The third section combines these thoughts and presents the challenges to future leadership which can be solved, in part, through the application of professional ethics. It is asserted that the application of General Flynn's philosophy will assist in solving those problems. The chapter concludes that there are moral deficiencies that emerge in a stressful military environment. These deficiencies--failures in integrity, misplaced loyalty, overconcern with image, and careerism--can be countered with the application of ethical principles of leadership as presented by General Flynn.

#### STRESS

Stress is an unavoidable aspect of life and military leaders are especially vulnerable to it. It is enhanced by the military member who finds himself or herself in a leadership position where ultimately he or she is held responsible for the actions of others. In recent years stress research has received increased attention. The reason for this interest is because researchers have found that stress may, and often does, significantly influence our behavior. In our personal lives, it affects how well we are able to adapt to and cope with life's challenges. In a military organization,

stress may directly influence organizational effectiveness (17:7-2).

Awareness of the nature of stress--how it arises, its physiological, psychological, and behavioral consequences within an organization--provides a background for the organizational leader who must be concerned with the effects of stress on individuals in the organization and the effectiveness of the organization in achieving its goals. We have established that stress is impossible to avoid and that the organization can itself be a source of stress for its members. Stress causes physiological, psychological, and behavioral responses. Individuals perceive task demands placed on them and subconsciously assess their capability to perform task demands. When a perceived demand is not compatible with perceived abilities, stress is often produced. Sources of stress within the organization include the nature of the task, role uncertainty, and organizational structures and socialization. The consequences of stress can be severe in terms of individual health and organizational effectiveness (17:7-29). Let's take a closer look at the phenomenon of stress and then link General Flynn's leadership model to the situational issue.

Colonel Howard T. Prince (USA), Professor and Head of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the United States Military Academy, West Point, discusses the interaction of stress, organizational climate, and ethical choices:

Stress both organizational and individual, may affect moral behavior. Under high stress conditions, performance and judgement may suffer. Among the more important stressors operating on moral behavior are role overload and role conflict. When we are given too many things to do, insufficient resources to do the task, or unrealistic deadlines, we may be faced with circumstances which increase pressure on us to cut corners or to violate our own ethical standards and values. We may also experience conflict between a directive from a leader and our assessment of its impact on us and our subordinates, especially if we are also leaders. This role conflict might be resolved in unethical ways as a means of coping with the conflict when stress is high. (16:21-22)

Organizational leaders must realize that their ethical example serves as a role model for their subordinates. The most important organizational influence on the moral behavior of organizational members is the behavior of organizational leaders:

The status of leadership confers inescapable moral responsibility for setting the example of the group. The example the leader sets goes far toward determining the ethical attitude and behaviors of the group--further, in fact, than verbal or written instructions. (16:21-20)

Stress on an organizational leader has the potential to be particularly costly to the unit in terms of decreased effectiveness in achieving organizational goals. As a result, the organizational leader must be concerned with stress and its management, so that its impact on mission goals can be minimized. The effects of stress on the organization are apparent especially during combat or other types of emergency conditions. Under these

conditions, the cohesion and social framework of the organization may be threatened. The organization itself may generate stress which must be addressed by its members. Leaders should understand the effects of stress on individuals in their organization, as well as on themselves, in order to moderate the effects of stress and to sustain an effective level of performance within the organization (17:7-2 - 7-3).

Organizations create conditions which cause stress for their members--and especially its leaders. Organizational members bring stress from their home life and other non work-related activities to the job. Examples of stress that carry over from off-duty to the work place are countless. If children are ill, if a spouse is unhappy or unfaithful, if a family is experiencing financial difficulties, or if there is a feeling of guilt over leaving children in child care facilities, job performance is likely to suffer. In addition to these significant stress-producing conditions, there are specific demands which arise on the job which are stress producing.

### The Nature of the Task

What we are expected to do on the job may be extremely difficult, demanding, and stressful activity in its own right. This is obvious in the case of the POW detained in the extortion environment of a Communist POW camp. Certainly this type of stress is self-evident in many occupations involving the threat of physical harm. Other examples include the policeman patrolling a beat in Bronx, or a fireman battling a blaze in the inner city of Detroit during riots, or a soldier on the battlefield. Some jobs, such as air traffic controllers, have a high degree of responsibility associated with their work, which can be psychologically debilitating. This condition is known as task overload, with stressful consequences that can be devastating (17:7-19).

### Work Environment

In addition to the nature of the task, the physical environment may also produce stress on the job. Work which occurs under extreme climatic conditions such as fighting a war in sub-freezing weather or remote duty in Alaska during winter, working under extreme noise such as an assembly line, or working in very physically confining quarters such as on board an extended submarine cruise are all illustrations of potentially stressful physical environments. The work environment can also produce vague instructions accompanied by a warning that the "job" had better be accomplished correctly and on time. Similarly, people are sometimes left unsure about their responsibilities, the scope of their duties, or how they are to be evaluated. This type of situation is often referred to as role uncertainty. The classic role conflict for the organizational leader arises from the often conflicting expectations of a leader's subordinates and a leader's boss. In this situation, the leader is simultaneously a leader, a follower, and a peer. Each group may have conflicting demands on these three different roles. This conflict can manifest itself in reduced job satisfaction, distrust toward leadership by subordinates, attribution of less power to such leaders, and reduced communications with them (17:7-19 - 7-20).

## Organizational Structure

Confusion or uncertainty over who the boss is, overly rigid rules, ineffective communications and a high degree of control or surveillance by supervisors which stifles creativity are structural conditions which increase stress within the organization ( :7-20 - 7-21). Often the staff officer is confronted with the situation where he or she works for two bosses. For example, a personnel officer has an "organizational" loyalty to support the unit commander, yet also has a "functional" loyalty to the Air Force Military Personnel Center regarding personnel issues. Stress is produced when the requirements of each are not compatible.

## Organizational Socialization

Many organizations have developed programs to welcome new people into the organization. New members learn how the organization expects them to behave, what aspects of the job are deemed important, and what the organizational values and professional ethics are. The period of initial entry and socialization is inherently stressful because of the change experienced by newcomers ( :7-21). For this reason, considerable effort is generated through sponsorship and base orientation programs when Air Force members change stations. Organizational socialization efforts represent a coping mechanism to address stress associated with change.

## LEADERSHIP IN A STRESSFUL ENVIRONMENT--LESSONS LEARNED

Stress accelerates moral weakness. Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale writes about stress based on his observations of the Vietnam POW experience:

The intensity and stark drama of my eight years in North Vietnam provided a quantity and range of leadership challenge that would more than fill an ordinary lifetime. In mere months or weeks, men made and destroyed their reputations. Those behind bars seemed to be scanning reams of data on the problems of good and evil in fast time. The extortion system, powered by our enemy's willingness to torture and impose isolation, quickly drove to the surface issues of moral integrity which at the pace of normal life could take years to foster and erupt into public view. (25:5)

Leadership basics are most vividly depicted in the prison camp situation. Prison also serves as a useful situation in which to further study man's behavior under stress. There are three lessons in particular that deserved to be explored.

## Loner Quest: Egocentric Behavior

In the stressful extortion environment which confronted the POWs, one could always improve his own position at the expense of his fellows by falling for the manipulator's subtle but ever present compromises. A loner improves his situation by making deals with others to improve his lot. This is

THE LIFE OF GENERAL JOHN P. FLYNN: A DISCUSSION OF PRISONER OF WAR EXPERIENCE  
AT THE 1970 NAACP CHAPLAIN CONFERENCE

Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado

1970-1971 (a tape recording distributed to USAF Installation Chaplains)

NOTE: A special visitor to the conference was Brigadier General John P. Flynn, the senior ranking officer of the prisoners of war in the Vietnam conflict and Commander of the 4th Allied Prisoner of War Wing. General Flynn was honored on behalf of all prisoners at the awards ceremony on the final evening of the conference. However, he also received a special gift from the chaplains during the celebration of the mass on Wednesday morning. In the following recording, Chaplain Meade presents a cross to General Flynn and after accepting the gift General Flynn movingly described something of his experience in prison. We trust that the significance of General Flynn's actions will more than compensate for the poor quality of the recording.

BRIGADIER GENERAL HENRY J. MEADE: My brother priests, I guess we are all by this time aware of the uniqueness of our guest this morning. When you hear General Flynn you will know why I make the reference that priesthood is that which is sacrificial...making Christ present to our brothers. In the five and a half years or so that General Flynn was in the prisoner of war camp, he made the priesthood come alive by his sacrifice and by his making Christ present to all who were there. There is a great bond of deep and loyal affection, spiritual, that we have for you. But not only is the pride we have in sharing your faith, but the greatness and example you have given to our country and to the world. I am sure that much of this greatness must have flowed from your beautiful wife, Mary Margaret. I would like to express to the General in the simplest way that affection we have for you, sir, not in the smallest way, but in the largest way. I would like for you to stand and receive from all of us this cross. We hope that while you, perhaps, may not be able to stand at this time with your uniform, you may know that this [cross] has been symbolized love and sacrifice. We want you to know that this is an expression of our love for you.

GENERAL JOHN P. FLYNN: Father Meade, gentlemen, I surely thought when as we sat down here he said we are going to be privileged to be here. I feel, Father, am undeserving of this. As you know I am a soldier and not deeply religious...and of course soldiering is a very worldly profession and I am pleased with that symbol. I know what it means and what you have given to me, I shall cherish it, Father, and treasure it. You asked me to make a few remarks concerning the overview of our life in prison camp. Generally, our experience was divided into two periods. The first period was from about March down to October 1969. October 1969 happened to be the watershed between the first and second.

Beginning [in] the first period, we were living in solo or isolated circumstances--undergoing heavy torture as the Vietnamese were attempting to use us for propaganda. The second period extended from October 1969 until March of 1971. Suffice it to say, during the first period, after we had lost our courage and there was nothing left, we, of course, turned to

F. Effective Dates of Promotion

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Temporary</u>	<u>Permanent</u>
2d Lt	23 May 44	27 Feb 47
1st Lt	18 Apr 45	22 Jul 47
Captain	30 Jun 50	23 May 51
Major	1 Apr 55	23 May 58
Lieutenant Colonel	23 Apr 58	1 Aug 64
Colonel	1 Jul 64	20 Sep 67
Brigadier General	1 May 71	24 Apr 74
Major General	24 Apr 74	
Lieutenant General	17 Sep 76*	

G. Civilian Awards and Recognition

Over 100 to include: Gold Medal Award from National Institute of Social Sciences, American Veteran Silver Helmet Award, 2 National Achievement Awards for Assisting Veterans, Doolittle Fellow Award, Knights of Malta (Maltese Cross), Distinguished Service Medal State of Alabama, Presidential Citation Air Force Association in 1981 and 1982

H. Educational Activity

Board of Directors, Falcon Foundation Air Force Academy; Member of British Institute of Strategic Studies and United States Institute of Strategic Studies; Doolittle Fellow; Honorary Degree, Norwich University

I. Post Service Activity

Veterans Affairs:

Member of VFW National Advisory Committee on National Security; Advisor on Veteran Affairs to Air Force Association; Senior Advisor to Vietnam POWs; President DAV Chapter for POWs. Testifies to the Congress on Veteran's matters. Chairman, Congressionally mandated Advisory Committee to Administer VA Affairs for POWs

Public Affairs:

Chairman, Walt Disney World Community Service Award Committee; Chairman, West Orange County United Way; Member, Board of Directors, National Bank of Fort Sam Houston; National Commander, Order of Daedalions (order of military pilots)

\* Date of Rank 16 Sep 76

8. Jul 1959 - Jan 1963 Planning and Programming Officer, Astronautics and Missile Branch, Strategic Weapons Plans Division, Director of Plans, Deputy Chief of Staff/Plans and Programs, HQ USAF, Washington, DC
9. Feb 1963 - Aug 1963 University of Maryland, College Park, MD
10. Sep 1963 - Jun 1964 National War College, Fort McNair, Washington, DC
11. Jul 1964 - May 1966 Deputy Commander for Operations, 49th Tactical Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem AB, Germany
12. Jun 1966 - Jul 1967 Director, Operational Readiness Inspection, Inspector General, HQ USAFE, Lindsey AB, Germany
13. Aug 1967 - 26 Oct 1967 Vice Commander, 388th Tactical Fighter Wing, Korat RTAFB, Thailand
14. 27 Oct 1967 - 14 Mar 1973 Prisoner of War (POW), North Vietnam
15. Mar 1973 - Aug 1973 Patient, USAF Medical Center, Keesler AFB, MI
16. Aug 1973 - Feb 1974 Vice Commander, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL
17. Feb 1974 - Aug 1974 Commandant, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, AL
18. Aug 1974 - Sep 1976 Commander, Air Force Military Training Center, Lackland AFB, TX
19. Sep 1976 - Nov 1978 The Inspector General, USAF, Washington, DC

E. Decorations and Service Awards

Air Force Cross	World War II Victory Medal
Distinguished Service Medal	Army of Occupation Medal (Japan)
w/2 oak leaf clusters	National Defense Service Medal
Silver Star	w/1 bronze service star
Legion of Merit w/2 oak leaf clusters	Korean Service Medal w/3 bronze service stars
Distinguished Flying Cross	Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
w/6 oak leaf clusters	Vietnam Service Medal w/14 bronze service stars
Bronze Star Medal with V device	Air Force Longevity Service Award
Air Medal w/16 oak leaf clusters	Ribbon w/7 oak leaf clusters
Purple Heart w/1 oak leaf cluster	Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon
Presidential Unit Citation Emblem	Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award	Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross
Ribbon w/2 oak leaf clusters	w/palm
American Campaign Medal	United Nations Service Medal
European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal w/3 bronze service stars	Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

PERSONAL FACT SHEET - Lieutenant General John P. Flynn, USAF (Ret)

A. Personal Data

1. Born - July 17, 1922 in Cleveland, Ohio.  
Mother and Father deceased.
2. Married: wife - Mary Margaret.  
Children - Sheila, Michaela, Bridget, Sean and Kevin.
3. Hometown - Cleveland, Ohio.

B. Education

1. Graduated - Pilot training, 1944; Armed Forces Staff College, 1959;  
and National War College (Distinguished Graduate), 1964.
2. Graduated - University of Maryland, College Park MD, B.A., 1963 and  
The George Washington University, Washington DC, M.A. (International  
Relations), 1964.

C. Background

Commissioned May 1944; flew combat in World War II, Korea, and  
Vietnam. Shot down over Hanoi 1967, senior prisoner of war 5 1/2  
years. Held many staff operational assignments, eight years in  
Washington DC area, 14 years overseas. Retired as Inspector General  
USAF, November 1978.

D. Service

1. Feb 1943 - Apr 1944 Aviation Cadet Training
2. May 1944 - Oct 1951 Photographic reconnaissance pilot, fighter  
pilot, and flight commander at various military installations
3. Nov 1951 - Apr 1952 Assistant Group Operations Officer, 20th  
Fighter-Bombardment Group, Langley AFB, VA
4. May 1952 - Jul 1954 Assistant Operations Officer, 20th Fighter-  
Bombardment Group, and later 49th Air Division (OPNL), England
5. Aug 1954 - Nov 1955 Assistant Plans Officer, and later Operations  
and Training Officer, 49th Air Division (OPNL), England
6. Dec 1955 - Jan 1959 Operations Staff Officer; Chief, Plans  
Division; and later Plans Officer, Director of Plans, HQ  
19th Air Force, Foster AFB Texas, and later Seymour Johnson AFB, NC
7. Feb 1959 - Jun 1959 Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, VA

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(Extract of United States Air Force Biography, Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Information, Command Services Unit, Bolling AFB, DC 20331. Biography has been edited for clarity and supplemented with additional information provided by General Flynn, 17 Dec 1984.)

### LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN PETER FLYNN, USAF (Ret)

General Flynn was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and a master's degree from The George Washington University. He is also a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College and the National War College.

He is a command pilot with more than 4,500 flying hours. He flew F-51s in WW II, and F-80s in Korea. He also served in various responsible positions with fighter units in the States, Japan and Europe.

In August 1967, General Flynn joined the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing in Thailand, flying F-105s. While Vice Commander, he was shot down over Hanoi, North Vietnam, and was a Prisoner of War (POW) for more than five years. After his release, he was assigned as Vice Commandant, Air War College at Maxwell AFB, Alabama in August 1973. In February 1974, he became the Commandant, Air Command and Staff College, and in August 1974 the Commander, Air Force Military Training Center, Lackland AFB, Texas. In September 1976, General Flynn assumed his final assignment prior to retirement as the Air Force Inspector General, with headquarters in Washington, DC. In this assignment he assisted the Air Force Chief of Staff in maintaining and improving the high level of readiness and fighting capacity of the Air Force.

General Flynn's awards and decorations include the Air Force Cross, Distinguished Service Medal with two Oak leaf clusters, Silver Star, Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross with six oak leaf clusters, Bronze Star Medal with V device (for valor), Air Medal with sixteen oak leaf clusters, and the Purple Heart with one oak leaf cluster for wounds sustained in combat and prison.

He was promoted to the grade of lieutenant general on September 17, 1976, with a date of rank of September 16, 1976. General Flynn retired from active duty on 28 November 1978, and in retirement frequently lectures on "The State of the Union" and "Ethics of Leadership."

General Flynn and his wife, Mary Margaret, reside in San Antonio, Texas.

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conceptual approach to leadership can solve. We need to guard against these unhealthy situations--and we need to start attacking the problem today! Our moral failures, along with our lack of personal integrity, could, if not corralled, destroy the effectiveness of the American military establishment as a fighting force. This situation provides motivation to study these ethical principles.

In my preface, I alluded to the American heritage which we must nurture and pass to future generations so that our sons, and daughters, and grandchildren can live in freedom and enjoy the benefits of our great Nation. Leaders have the moral obligation to uphold those values and principles upon which our Nation was founded and, in so doing, avoid moral deficiencies which emerge in the stressful environment of the military profession. When making everyday decisions, leaders must consider, first and foremost, the needs of the Nation, and then those of the Air Force, the unit, and, finally, the individual, in that order (18:12).

Leadership is personified through individuals, recognizing that in the ultimate decisions of life and career, he or she may have to stand alone. In that lonely environment it does us well, as leaders, to periodically check our ethical standards. General Flynn's concepts are simple, yet profound. The responsibilities of his conceptual approach to leadership are humbling. How relevant these thoughts are, and how convincingly they ring, depend upon how honorably and efficiently we, as leaders of future generations of officers, perform our duties.

## Chapter Five

### CONCLUSION

Libraries and archives are full of books on the subject of leadership and there are nearly as many principles of good leadership as there are people who serve as leaders. Therefore, as a leader, you must pick and apply those principles that work best for you; in other words, a leader must adapt and personalize those traits that best reinforce his or her style and self image. Usually, this means adopting those techniques that are a natural extension of your own personality.

The purpose of this paper was to answer the question: Can a conceptual leadership model be developed to assist officers in meeting the future challenges to Air Force leadership? General Flynn's philosophy of leadership offers some considerations to serve as a guide when leaders are confronted with organizational stress that often accelerates the potential for moral weakness. After reading the biographical sketch of General Flynn's life in chapter one, it could be concluded that there were no indications he was destined to play such a significant role in the POW scenario. In fact, none of us are prewarned of the fact that we may, at some time in the future, be thrown into a stressful environment where we must take command and hold a group of people together to attain a common goal. The stress environment of the POW camps, described in chapter two, revealed the need for unchallengeable integrity, sound moral and ethical principles, and the ability to communicate. While it is doubtful that we will be exposed to prisoner of war conditions during our life, the fact remains that the chances are excellent that we will be called upon, when we are probably least prepared, to perform the leadership function in a stress-producing environment. Similar observations will certainly surface in future stressful environments, as surfaced in the POW camps in Vietnam. Most probably, the environment will be combat or some other unknown situation which threatens future United States vital interests. Chapter three presented a leadership model composed of several basic leadership principles which were proven effective for stressful environments. The final chapter discussed the need for application of General Flynn's philosophy of leadership to the contemporary leadership environment.

The technical nature of modern military service has created issues which challenge future leadership and reinforces the need to study ethical principles such as those presented by General Flynn. First, we should start with blatant forms of ethical relativism which blur the real issue of what is right and wrong. Second, the "exaggerated loyalty" syndrome needs to be examined where people are afraid to tell the truth and are discouraged from being totally honest. Third, the obsession with image must be addressed where people are not even interested in the truth. And last, the drive for success in which ethical sensitivity is lowered because of the personal need to achieve must be countered. These are the challenges General Flynn's

to win, the sure knowledge that in war there is no substitute for victory, that if you lose, the nation will be destroyed, that the very obsession of your public service must be duty, honor, country.  
(10:4-58)

calling, but to enter military service because it will train you for a technical job which can be used later in civilian life. The attempt to manage the Air Force as if it were a business has caused an erosion of its institutional values. We need to change this perception to one where "The military professional views safeguarding the nation as his calling, not as some temporary job" (22:18).

In their book, Crisis in Command, Gabriel and Savage accused the Army of adopting "a new ethical code rooted in the entrepreneurial model of the modern business corporation" (9:16). A similar perception exists in the Air Force. The traditional military values of duty, honor, and country, have been overpowered by self-centered careerism that threaten to dominate contemporary military values. Too often, officers are encouraged to pursue "ticket-punching exercises" and "square filling projects" solely to enhance their promotion portfolio. We support attending the right schools, pursuing the right jobs at the right time, working for the right effectiveness report endorsements, and avoiding low promotion career fields (9:18). General Flynn's comments in this area are right on target. He conveys the belief that there is nothing wrong with career advancement; we must, however, guard against career advancement which is manifested as careerism. Careerism is where the real motivation or aim is to "game the system" in order to create a more competitive record for a promotion board, rather than to earnestly do a good job and allow the promotion to follow as a matter of course. The need for integrity in today's military is no less valid than in the past, it merely appears to have lost some of its appeal to younger members (9:15) and needs to be readdressed. When the demands of the military profession are in conflict with an individual's capabilities, ethical violations all too often result. The solution to this dilemma is the challenge to future leadership.

There is, therefore, a case for reacquainting tomorrow's leaders (everybody, not just junior officers) with the time honored values that have proven to work in the past. Ethical standards, such as General Flynn's six concepts need to be the cornerstone of the effort.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter initially analyzed the nature of stress in the military which often impacts moral behavior. After establishing the existence of the moral implications of the stress environment, there was an examination of three lessons which emerged regarding leadership in the stress environment of prison. The chapter then discussed some alleged moral deficiencies which emerge in the stressful environment of the military profession--failures in integrity, misplaced loyalty, over-concern with image, and careerism. These are the very problems to which General Flynn provides ethical solutions. His challenge is that we should examine all decisions, practices, goals and values which make ethical behavior difficult. Military leaders at all levels must redirect their efforts to challenge moral deficiencies. In the words of General Douglas MacArthur:

And in all this welter of change and development your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable. It is to win our wars. Everything else in your professional career is but a corollary to this vital dedication. ...Yours is the profession of arms, the will

selves and into their better selves, or making them conscious of the high-minded goals and the unconscious beneath self-centered desires. Inspirational leadership counters the debilitating drive for success that causes some officers to violate their integrity and attempt to enhance their relative position at the expense of fellow officers. This "cut throat" approach must be countered to halt the obsession with image that some officers demonstrate at the expense of others. In summary, the inspirational leader has the ability to read the minds of his men, to understand what they want, to know what they ought to want. He also has the spirit and persuasive power to implant his vision into the hearts of his subordinates (25:5-7).

## FUTURE APPLICATIONS OF GENERAL FLYNN'S PHILOSOPHY

With stress being such an important factor with such grave consequences, all the more reason why the military professional needs to consider the ethical consequences of his actions. The need for ethics almost becomes self-evident. In his book, *To Serve With Honor*, Richard A. Gabriel states:

Without some standards of behavior, and judgements of that behavior, peaceful human intercourse becomes impossible. In a general sense, the one element that makes human society possible is the expectation on the part of one's fellow man that individuals will observe certain obligations. In the most rudimentary sense, observing obligations in a willing manner is what we call ethics. (1:56)

General Egan's concepts contain important insights and provide criteria leaders must satisfy if they are to be regarded as genuinely effective military and civilian. In contrast, writers continually document failures in personnel management, concern with image, careerism, and misplaced loyalty as being typical in every day military life (9:16-18). While these concerns are being addressed, nevertheless exist to some extent. One

The military leader must perform many technical jobs. We see him or her in the planning, in the engineering shops, personnel offices, missile silos, and in the command and control center. The military effort has, until recently, tried to stress the fact that the military career is really no different from a civilian job. The only real reason for a man's responsibility and real reason for existence with such a career is "The Confucianist Great Way of Life," or "The Navy...It's an Adventure...It's a Challenge." The military system, national security and war are our business (22:19). The military system is composed of values associated with a military organization, such as "Duty," "Honor," "Country,"--the Gates Report (22:20). The military (the volunteer force) argued that the primary reason for military service should be on monetary inducements guided by market forces (22:21). There are many visible signs of this trend in the military, from open bay barracks to dormitories, from manual labor to high-tech, from training facilities from manual labor to high-tech, from weapons to computers. In a word, technical sophistication changes the way we work and think. Many senior leaders are concerned about the fundamental shift in the motivational bases of the military. They are moving toward an occupation--"just another job"--where "the only reason for existence and human self interest" (22:29). The importance of the military service because it is a noble

certainly unhealthy, and dangerous, for the group. The intensity of life in prison showed that POWs had to submerge their individual survival instincts into an ideal of universal solidarity for the good of the group (25:5).

The parallel which exists with the challenges to leadership today and in the future are obvious. In our quest to achieve and "look good" before our superiors and subordinates we may all too often place ourselves above the good of the group. This is the manifestation of egocentric behavior that General Flynn warned us about. His hierarchy of needs discussed in Chapter Three provides the framework by which we can correct this tendency. If a person considers and assesses decisions by using the hierarchy in its proper order, correct ethical response is inevitable.

#### Lesson Two: Loyalty and Respect Must be Earned

In high-stress situation, "status" will not carry a leader. It is almost as if a leader has to prove himself as being worthy of "followers." In other words, a leader has to have more going for himself than title, seniority, rank, or position in the chain of command. A leader cannot demand respect, it must be earned. It is rather the "demonstrated actions" that earn followers respect, and out of respect comes loyalty. Unless a leader is able to earn the respect of his followers, when the going gets tough, they will just listen to orders and walk away (25:6).

A modern application of these thoughts covers many aspects of the leadership model. It seems that respect is fostered by the belief that subordinates are responsible for their actions, and it is important to allow subordinates to develop that responsibility on their own. When a person is in a position of authority there is a tendency to project values and ideas upon subordinates. As General Flynn points out, effective leaders must focus on issues but not dictate moral behavior. It is better for the effective leader to demonstrate the desired behavior through his or her actions. This is precisely the approach which counters the "exaggerated loyalty" syndrome where people are afraid to tell the truth or are discouraged from being totally honest. Trust is fundamental to all relationships that build loyalty and unit cohesion. A way to build trust is to be honest with subordinates. Subordinates are the first to recognize and respect honesty. Therefore, When a leader says he or she is going to do something, it must be done, because a leader's word is his or her bond. If one doesn't keep faith with associates, no matter how ingenious or brilliant that person is, one will never get the cooperation or respect desired.

#### Lesson Three: The Need for "Inspirational" Leadership

Under stress, ordinary "transactional" leadership, in which there is a give and take relationship between leader and subordinate, will never be sufficient. That is to say, transactional leadership driven by the basic instincts of the bargaining table whereby the leader makes an accommodation in the expectation that his followers will make a complementary accommodation, simply will not stand up. Rather, leaders need to instruct and inspire their followers to recognize worthy needs, and then make those needs their wants. Inspired leaders have a way of raising their followers out of their everyday

our God. The more dire the circumstances, the more desperate our prayers were, not particularly to survive that experience, but to survive it in honor and dignity. The second period which I'd like to address—I'll just tell you during this period we were now in a circumstance of communal living. We were separated in groups of about fifty men. We were held together by a very sophisticated communications system. A group of nine of us seniors were relatively isolated, but we were in charge of policy.

We structured an organization and one of the first things that we did after we had promulgated our policies was to designate a wing chaplain. Now that wing chaplain happened to be a Navy fighter pilot—which you should be delighted to hear father—he was also a Methodist, and really a beautiful man. Each week, this man put out a spiritual message to all of our people. I might also add, to give you an idea of the flavor to religion within our community, each message that we sent out was signed with the words "GBU" which quite obviously means "God bless you." There wasn't a message that we ever put out that did not have that suffix at the end of it.

I'd like to describe just a little bit about what would happen within our groups of fifty men. Within each group, a chaplain was appointed. Of course, you had a heavy population of Protestants so normally this man would be a Protestant. He would conduct services each Sunday, generally according to the Protestant format. We would start these services with a pledge of allegiance to the flag and then a patriotic hymn. Then we would recite prayers which were common to both the Protestant and Catholic faiths—prayers such as the Our Father and The Apostle's Creed. These prayers were interspersed and then we would sing hymns. I am very proud that I committed by rote perhaps more Protestant hymns...that I'd be most comfortable in any Baptist church! ...We had it committed to memory because we didn't have any written materials.

We would hold communion services one Sunday a month, according to the Protestant format, and every fourth month, we would hold those communion services in accordance with the Catholic format. Within our own particular group of nine men, we held daily mass. There were only three of the nine [men] who were Catholic—they happen to be Flynn, Admiral Jerry Denton, and another Navy chap (a commander) by the name of Jim Mulligan. We three would meet each morning. One day I would take the priesthood, the next day Jeremiah, the next day Jim Mulligan. We would say mass very simply. We would not sing. Then we would use whatever was available for the sacred element and we would give communion to each other. Quite often we would embrace each other after mass, and in prison, in Hanoi, this was the first time I have ever kissed a man—and the kiss was genuine and, I think, representative of the religious ambient in which we lived. We did everything within the format based upon our memory except hear each other's confessions! But, we really didn't need that because, of course, we knew everything about the other person.

Now this feeling for Christianity was not just stated—we lived by Christian precepts. In fact, perhaps the most important policy which we had ever issued in that prison was one in which we articulated the idea of forgiveness. A man could cooperate with the Vietnamese, or be guilty of giving way under rather difficult circumstances. We did not care what that man did. All we cared about is that he recognized what he had done was wrong and would come back to us. The policy that was issued had in it the words,

"It is neither Christian, nor military, to nag a repentant sinner to his grave." We lived by those words.

In that very high pressure environment, of all of the things that I think were difficult, was that we had lived perhaps too long in solo. When thrown together with another person, there could be a thousand imagined slights, and there were a thousand unnecessary, but [perceived as] necessary apologies. A man might turn to himself, because another man had splashed him while brushing his teeth, and they would not talk to each other for perhaps a week. The man who had hated the fellow prisoner who had brushed his teeth would ultimately apologize. We tried to live the very real Christian precept, and in all cases, I think perhaps the most useful criterion which we had was "what would Christ do in this situation?" I submit that this is still a rather good criterion [for use] in contemporary society. I could go on and consider other aspects of our life, but I think perhaps, this symbolizes more than anything, the strong Christianity that ran through us. God bless you all.

From the Inspector General's Notebook...

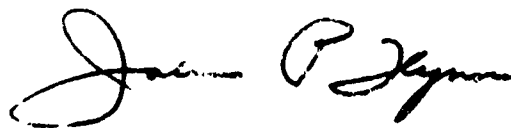
### CHANGING OF THE WATCH

It is with mixed emotions that I end my watch as The Inspector General of the Air Force. As I look back, not only on this tour, but on the whole of my service, I realize that I have been blessed with many things. But the clearest blessing of all was the opportunity to serve my Country in the company of an outstanding group of Americans all dedicated to the same purpose. The men and women of the United States Air Force who, along with the other Services, have carried us through not only our moments of glory, but also our hours of darkness.

It is not without a degree of sadness that I salute farewell to you honorable men and women with whom I have been privileged to serve. But that nostalgia is overtaken by the pride and confidence I have in the young officers and airmen and civilians who will carry on the task where those who depart leave off. As The Inspector General I traveled extensively. This experience has shown me that the Air Force is equal to this task because *you people are strong and are quite capable of dealing with the future.*

Thus I yield without regret because I have the knowledge and faith that the Air Force will continue to nurture those principles which have been the bedrock of our strength--personal integrity--dedication to our Nation and Air Force--justice--but justice tempered with compassion--understanding and a hand that reaches out to sustain and restore those who may falter on the way. And knowledge--knowledge of our strength and heritage and how it must be used prudently to preserve perhaps the greatest blessing of all: Our political system--the oldest and strongest political system extant in the world today--passed and entrusted to each generation by the previous one.

My warmest regards and best wishes to each and every one of you. And for God and our Nation's sake--carry on.



JOHN P. FLYNN  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
The Inspector General

**END**

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