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Address at 4-Star General Promotion Ceremony



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Thank you. Secretary Gates, thank you. General Casey, thank you. Thank you, everyone.

I wish I could begin to describe the incredible feelings of gratitude, humility, and love that are absolutely consuming me at this very moment -- but it's impossible.

Secretary Gates, I can't begin to tell you how much it means to the Dunwoody-Brotchie family that you took the time to be here today. Thank you so much for your support. Thanks for your kind words; and more importantly thank you for your service.

General Casey, thank you for hosting -- and honoring me and my family -- for hosting this ceremony today. Thank you for your trust and confidence. I know with this promotion comes a tremendous responsibility, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to continue to serve this great Army, in this critical time, in this new capacity.

Chaplain Carver, thank you for that uplifting blessing and that beautiful prayer.

Sergeant Bingham, thank you for giving us all goose bumps during that beautiful rendition of the National Anthem.

And to the entire protocol team and my special staff who pulled this all together -- no easy task -- thank you so much. Thank all of you.



Secretary Geren, Admiral Mullen, Mr. Clapper, Admiral Roughead, General Conway, Mrs. Casey, General Schwartz, General Reimer, Mrs. Shinseki, General Schoomaker, General Petraeus, Mr. Bell, Mr. Wilke, Mr. Ford, General Chiarelli, General Tilelli, General and Mrs. Cody, Mr. James, Mr. Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. Kunkle, General Griffin, General Salomon, General and Mrs. Wilson, General Coburn, General and Mrs. McNeill, and Sergeant-Major of the Army, Kenneth O. Preston, other distinguished guests, great friends, family members: Thank you so much for being here to share this special day. I know so many have come so far and we're truly grateful.

You know, I've had the chance and opportunity to be in audiences like the one assembled today, but I can assure you the view from up here is much different. It's as overwhelming as it is humbling, especially for someone who thought 5th grade was the best three years of her life.

Secretary Geren, in your opening remarks at AUSA¹ this year at the convention, you mentioned that this was the year, the last for this Administration; the last this and the last that. And I couldn't help but think how fortunate I had been to have lived a lifetime of firsts. And it's been the Army -- this Army -- that has given me those opportunities.

And I stand before you today as one of the luckiest people in the world; lucky because I have been blessed in so many ways. I grew up in a wonderful family, a very special family; and it was special because I had the best mom and dad a kid could ever ask for; and I had sisters and brothers who made growing up fun. Heck, all we ever worried about: Was dad going to let us stay up to watch the second half of Bonanza?² And was Santa Clause really, really going to deliver the goods. Seriously, I wanted for nothing. And now, I have a wonderful husband, cute dog, great job, great friends, and we get to call Hawaii our home. And I thank the Lord for these blessings every day.



But those blessings don't stop there. My dad, who will soon be 90 years old, as you know is here today. That's him right there. Just six weeks ago he was seriously ill and had to undertake a risky operation. Not only did he survive the operation, but he was bound and determined to be here -- and here he is today. Talk about never quitting. Talk about never accepting defeat. That's my dad, my hero.

As you heard, dad's a West Point class of 1943; and his dad, Halsey, was West Point class of 1905; and his granddad, Henry, was West Point class of 1866. Now you understand why people think I have olive drab blood. As General Casey said, my dad was wounded both in World War II and the Korean War, and was the recipient of two Purple Hearts, and recognized for valor with a Distinguished Service Cross. When people talk too him about his two Purple Hearts, he's quick to say he was just a slow learner. But we all know better.



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And dad I'm grateful for this opportunity to say thanks for your service to our nation and for instilling in me the timeless values of integrity, courage, and sense of values. And I know most of my success is founded in what I learned from you as a dad, as a patriot, and as a soldier.

I wish my mom could be here today, but I know she's here with us in spirit. But I know she's smiling because this event created another opportunity for a Dunwoody family get-together. But I'll tell you that my mom, a devout Catholic, was the strongest, most selfless, most caring, compassionate, loving person I have ever met. She pretty much raised all six of us on our own, while dad was serving our nation.

But she always taught us the glass was always half full, and no matter what the challenge, no how matter how hard the road, that it would never rain on our parade. If there's anyone who deserves induction into the order of sainthood, it's my mother, and I miss her a lot.

But I'm really happy and glad that Craig's mom -- my other mom -- is here today all the way from San Bernardino, California. Helen, I know it wasn't an easy journey but thank you for making it.

I'd like to introduce the rest of the Dunwoody-Brotchie clan, all of who[m] I'm so very proud of. My brother, Buck -- who's also West Point grad, class of '70 -- made a career in the business world after he did his time in the Army; and now has kind of put his life on hold to help care for my dad. My sister Sue, she was the third female helicopter pilot in our Army, and now continues to serve our Army at CENTCOM³ headquarters as a retiree recall. Her husband, Jim, is also here, is a graduate of the Air Force Academy and served our nation flying helicopters and A-10s. Their daughter, Captain Jenny Schoeck, is also an Air Force Academy grad, class of 2000, and like her dad she flies A-10s⁴, and recently returned from flying combat missions in Afghanistan.

If anyone is worried about the next generation of warriors: fear not. The bench is loaded with talented Sailors, Airmen, Soldiers, and Marines. And while I know that I may be the first woman to achieve this honor, I know with certainty I won't be the last.

My other sister, Jackie, mother of two beautiful daughters, and her husband Steve are here from Arizona. Steve's a Vietnam Vet, and recently retired after 30 years as a Fire Department Captain and a paramedic, and we're glad they're both here. And one of their daughters, Brooke, and her husband Nicolai, are here. Brooke is on a full time scholarship for a Ph.D. at Duke University in a discipline I can hardly pronounce.

My brother, Bill, is here from Oklahoma. He's working on the new construction there at Fort Sill.⁵ Bill, thank you for being here and making our Dunwoody family reunion complete. And I'm really thrilled that Craig's two sons, my stepsons, Brian and Scott are, here as well -- all the way from Redlands, California, and Geneva Lakes, Wisconsin. I can't tell you how much it means that you're here. Brian's a PGA golf pro -- Hooah. (Anyone looking for lessons....) And Scott and his wife Alicia will deliver our first grandbaby next April. "Grandson" -- I stand corrected. Mr. Wonderful comes another time. Thank you.



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We also have a ton of cousins from both sides of the family who are here to celebrate today. All of them have a special story. All are unique in their own way. Thank you for traveling to take part in this great with -- great day with us.

So here we are 33 years after I took the oath as a Second Lieutenant, and I have to tell you this is not exactly how I envisioned my life unfolding. Even as a young kid, all I ever wanted to do was teach Physical Education and raise a family. And I joined the Army right out of college. I got a direct commission as a Second Lieutenant with a two-year commitment. The offer was too good to refuse. They paid me 500 dollars a month during my senior year in college, and they sent me to Airborne School. I couldn't believe they were going to pay me to jump out of airplanes.

But it was always clear to me that my Army experience was just going to be a two year detour en route to my fitness profession. So when people ask me, "Did you" -- "Ann, did you ever think you were going to be a general officer, to say nothing about a 4-Star?" I say, not in my wildest dreams. There is no one more surprised than I -- except, of course, my husband. And you know what they say: Behind every successful woman there's an astonished man. So as to my childhood dreams -- while I'm still sorting the fitness business -- and my family -- there's nothing better than being a part of a huge Army family that I've come to love so much.

I attribute staying in the Army past my two years to my very first platoon sergeant, sergeant first class, Wendell Bowman, who took the training of second lieutenants very seriously. And I remember him telling me, "I'm going to make you the best lieutenant in the United States Army." And a few weeks later he came back to me and said, "Ma'am, you're really going to make me work at this, aren't you?" That was 1976, a period we now refer to as a "broken Army." But I can assure you, there was nothing broken about sergeant first class Wendell Bowman. He was the best NCO⁶ in the company, and he was tireless in enforcing and instilling the standards and values he knew to be the hallmark of our Army. And he is the reason I stayed.

But my husband, Craig, is the reason I'm still here. I met Craig 21 years ago when we were students at CGSC⁷, and for those of you who know Craig, you know we did not meet in the library. Matter of fact, I-- I met him when we were taking the Army PT test.⁸ And he won the two-mile -- Army two-mile run by a wide margin. And I remember us Army guys kind of being a little ticked that this big Air Force guy could run faster than any of us. And I don't know if it were a matter because he was big or because he was Air Force, but that big Air Force guy became my running buddy and -- and the rest is history.

But Craig's a hero in his own right, but he's my hero too. He's a man of integrity, commitment, and compassion. And all you have to do is talk with anyone who's ever served with him and know -- to know and appreciate the respect and admiration they have for him. He served 26 years -- stellar years -- as an Air Force combat controller, and for part of the joint special operations he led the men who brought the air power to the ground fight. Craig shares laughter as easily as tears.



He encourages me and he counsels me. And every day, and every now and then, he catches me off guard and interrupts me in whatever I'm doing and says, "Have I told you lately how proud I am of you?" I don't think I would be standing here today without him, but I know I would not have wanted to try.

This promotion has taken me back in time like no other event in my entire life. And I didn't appreciate the enormity of the event until the tidal waves of cards, letters, and emails started coming my way. And I've heard from men and women from every branch of service, from every region of our country, and every corner of the world.

I've heard from moms and dads who see this promotion as a beacon of hope for their own daughters, and an affirmation that anything is possible through hard work and commitment. And I've heard from women veterans of all wars, many who just wanted to say "congratulations," some who just wanted to say "thanks," and still others just wanted to say they were so happy this day had finally come. And to all of them I owe a very special thanks for their dedication, for their commitment, and for paving the way.

And I know it might sound trite, but for me today is all about two simple words: Thank you. For this day has allowed me to reconnect with so many family members, friends, and mentors from my past -- those who have touched my life in so many ways. People like my best friend from 5th grade, Elaine Pierce, now Elaine Rins, and her husband Brad, who have joined us today. We hadn't been in contact for over 40 years. Her braces are gone, but the fun memories are still there and I now know there's more to come. And friends like Mary Ann Benca, from Randolph New York, population 1200. We used to spend our summers up there with our grandparents and Mary Ann became my "every summer buddy." And she's here with us today.

Also here today are so many of our military friends -- Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, civilians and spouses -- literally from every assignment I've ever had; and you honor us with your presence.

I also want to thank the courageous women that have made this journey with me -- great friends like Jan Edmunds, Barb Doornink, Pat Hickerson; women like Kris Drach, who were on point for the integration of women into the regular Army. They, too, led the way. Because of them, I was never alone. Because of them, I was never afraid. And leaders like Miss Kathy Condon, my colleague and 3-Star equivalent; Vice Admiral Ann Rondeau, Lieutenant General Kathy Gainey, women who have achieved so many, many firsts in their own career fields.

But I know I would not be standing here today were it not for leaders who believed in me, leaders who took a chance on me, and leaders who not only encouraged me but inspired me to be the best I could be. Leaders like Colonel Henry Fitzpatrick, who's here today, my battalion commander from 1981. And leaders from my 82nd, 18th Airborne, color days, who helped kick down the doors in the Airborne community with me; leaders like Carl Freeman, Zannie Smith, General Dan McNeill, Stan Crystal, Dave Petraeus, General Hugh Shelton; and who could forget "Chicken Man" Wright.



There are also leaders who have challenged me with incredible opportunities, leaders who gave me so many of those first opportunities I mentioned earlier. Leaders like General Shinseki; leaders like Tom Glisson, General Reimer, General Griffin, General Schoomaker; and now General George Casey, and our Secretary.

How could I not be successful with a lineup of leaders, coaches, and mentors like that?

My final thank you is to our valiant Army, to the men and women our nation turns to time and time again, and to their heroic families who continue to sacrifice for all of us. The Army nurtured me and mentored me, and today the Army offers me the chance to return the favor; and I embrace this opportunity with open arms, and I do so with a deep commitment to the Army, with all the energy, strength, and determination of one proud soldier.

During this year's NFL induction Hall of Fame, I was moved when I heard the great receiver Art Monk say, from the day he donned his uniform football was all he ever wanted to do. And even though I thought I was only coming into the Army for two years, I now know, from the day I first donned my uniform, soldiering is all I ever wanted to do. I can't point to any one life-changing epiphany, but I now know the Army profession I'm so proud to be part of is a reflection of the very values I grew up with in the Dunwoody family.

General Casey, I'm honored to be joining your 4-Star bench of general officers: An extraordinary band of brothers who have the responsibility of guiding our nation's Army and its incredible soldiers into the future.

Thank you, and God bless all of you.

¹Association of the United State Army

²Popular television series in the *westerns* genre that ran on from September 12, 1959 to January 16, 1973.

³United States Central Command, a theater-level Unified Combatant Command unit of the U.S. armed forces, established in 1983 under the operational control of the U.S. Secretary of Defense.

⁴American single-seat, twin-engine, straight-wing jet aircraft developed by Fairchild-Republic for the United States Air Force to provide close air support (CAS) of ground forces by attacking tanks, armored vehicles, and other ground targets, with a limited air interdiction capability.

⁵United States Army post near Lawton, Oklahoma, about 85 miles southwest of Oklahoma City.

⁶Non-commissioned officer

⁷Command and General Staff College

⁸Physical Fitness Test designed to test the muscular strength/endurance and cardiovascular respiratory fitness of soldiers in the United States Army.