

prominent Congressmen. In his suggested reading list for generals were Thucydides and Carl von Clausewitz, as might be expected, but a late addition was a book entitled Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't, by business writer James C. Collins.

In the autumn of 2002, General Shinseki began his last sprint toward the goal line, his retirement in June of 2003. That was not the time to begin anything new but to do whatever possible to ensure that what he had started would not be diluted or reversed after he had gone away. He told a symposium of defense industry executives: "We can't afford to turn transformation over to those with fixed attitudes and habits who will spend the next eight years going through the motions. The last three years have been dedicated to showing the potential, giving people time to get educated about transformation's vectors, and spark the imaginations of those who don't mind competing. There's more than ample work to go around, but faint hearts need not apply."

He connected his vision with the image of 9/11 the year before: "More than any other reason, the memory of those who lost their lives that day and the troops who have gone into harm's way, some giving their last full measure in the days since, are our strongest arguments for a sense of urgency to transform. We must get this right."

The CSA gave a particularly powerful address to the AUSA in October, summing up what he had sought to accomplish in the previous three years and making his final arguments to those who had opposed him. To the Army, he said: "Some still persist in slowing our momentum, undercutting progress. One last time—one last time because this is the last time I get to make this speech—one last time: Work with us, help us; soldiers are counting on us to get it right, and quickly. And if you can't help us, get out of the way. We're on the move."

To the Pentagon's politically-appointed civilians, he reiterated his belief in the need to consummate victory by putting soldiers with their boots on the ground. "People live on the ground; they have their problems on the ground; they attempt to regulate their affairs through governments on the ground," he said. "If required, the Army can scale its capabilities precisely to compel better behavior on the part of antagonists or, if necessary, to close with and destroy adversaries with decisive force. These requirements are timeless. World powers have always done this better than others. Nations whose power and status have waned lost the capacity or the will to be able to do these things—to control terrain and populations. We are not in that category. This is a peace-

ful nation; this is an Army that responds to the instincts of a democracy. We have the will, and we will not surrender that capability."

On new artillery, General Shinseki pointed to Afghanistan, where soldiers fought uphill against a determined enemy armed with mortars and occupying higher ground: "We have to ask, 'Is this the way we want our soldiers to fight the next time? Is this the kind of risk we want our soldiers to carry into battle?' At least from this chief, the answer is: 'Hell, no.' We owe them better. We know that they will always compensate for what we have not provided. But our job is to insure that there is as little slack as possible to have to compensate for. And we are going to meet that responsibility no matter what all the smart folks have to say about the obsolescence of organic, indirect fire cannons. OK?"

General Shinseki rarely permitted himself to be bitter in his quarrels but expressed himself with a bit of heat in his last comments on the Stryker armored vehicle. Noting that some were still skeptical about the need for the Stryker or its performance, the general said claims that the Army had been deceptive about the vehicle were baseless and thoughtless. "I appreciate the debate," he said. "Look at our numbers, challenge our metrics, question our analytics—they're all on review. But don't question our honor or our integrity."



Medal of Honor recipients including Senator Inouye.

The chief began his farewells to the Army in that address. "This marks the last time that this chief will have the opportunity and the honor to stand at this podium to report out on the state of the Army," General Shinseki said. "So let me just close the way I've opened some of my previous presentations. My name is Shinseki and I am a soldier. I will always be a soldier."

There was, however, one more scuffle. General Shinseki was called in February 2003 to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee. During the hearing, Senator Carl Levin, Democrat of Michigan and one of the more astute members of the committee, asked the Army chief how large a force would be

needed, in his professional opinion, to occupy Iraq after an invasion. As a matter of law, protocol, and tradition, senior military officers are required to answer such questions with candor and intellectual honesty. General Shinseki thus answered: "Several hundred thousand." Similarly, in another committee, he said: "It could be as high as several hundred thousand. We all hope it is something less." The plans of Mr. Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, called for less than 100,000; Mr. Wolfowitz said publicly that General Shinseki's estimate was "wildly off the mark."

The Secretary of the Army, Thomas White, tried to back the CSA, saying: "General Shinseki has some experience in this, having run the stabilization force in Bosnia." Mr. White had planned to stay in office until General Shinseki retired in June that year but he, too, ran afoul of Mr. Rumsfeld and Mr. Wolfowitz. He resigned in May.



VIII. An Honorable Profession

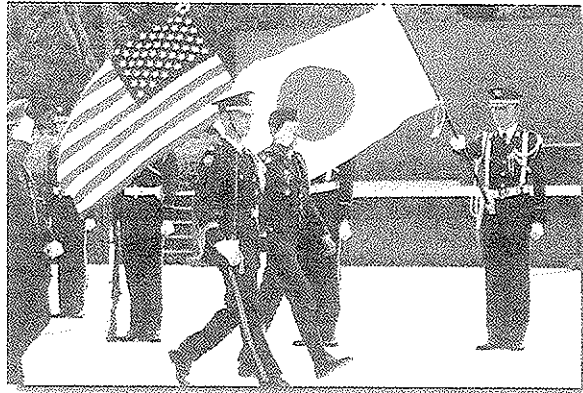
It ended as it began, on a warm day in June, four years after General Shinseki had been sworn in as chief of staff and 43 years after he had arrived on the Plain at West Point, a lad fresh from Kauai. The parade ground for the retirement ceremony at Fort Myer was decked out with flags and battle streamers as soldiers from the 3rd Infantry, the Old Guard, formed up in their dress blues. About 70 of the general's family were there as was Sergeant Ernie Kingcade, who had taught Second Lieutenant Shinseki how to adjust artillery fire as they sailed aboard a troopship to Vietnam. Generals and admirals by the score, the sergeant major of the Army and other senior sergeants, senators and representatives, diplomats, friends in uniform and civilian clothes from the Army staff, and classmates from West Point and Hunterdon Central High and Kauai High crowded into the stands or lined the field. The Old Guard paraded with the Army band playing the marches as they passed in review. Color guards bore the flags of all 50 states. The fife and drum corps marched in revolutionary war uniforms. Ceremonial cannon fired a 19-gun salute at the south end of the parade ground. A soldier in dress blues presented Mrs. Shinseki with a bouquet of her favorite yellow roses, a token of the time the general commanded the 1st Cavalry Division.

In his introductory remarks, the Acting Secretary of the Army, Les Brownlee, said General Shinseki "has epitomized the quiet professional and, being the genuinely humble and modest man he is, Ric Shinseki will never take personal credit for the enormous impact that he has had on the Army." Mr. Brownlee said: "Simply stated, the chief looked to the future and conceived a vision of what our Army must be able to do to protect our nation in the 21st Century." The acting secretary concluded: "He translated that vision into an ambitious, yet doable plan of action revolving around people, readiness and transformation. He went out and got the resources and implemented his plan with tremendous intellect, courage and sheer force of will—irrevocably changing our Army for the better." He awarded General Shinseki the Distinguished Service Medal, the Army's highest non-combat decoration. Earlier, the Defense Department and the Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard each made similar presentations.

It is too early to gauge General Shinseki's success in his ambitious endeavor to bring "fundamental and comprehensive change" to the Army. Certainly the Army he led from 1999 to 2003 fought with distinction in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Stryker brigade that is emblematic of the general's bold plan was tested in Iraq and was found to be deployable, agile, and lethal. The soldiers

who captured the Iraqi fugitive leader, Saddam Hussein, were trained on General Shinseki's watch. The general's emphasis on leadership and caring for soldiers set new standards. Perhaps most telling, the public polls and the selection of soldiers as the "Persons of the Year" by Time magazine was evidence that General Shinseki's Army had earned the esteem of the nation. It will be up to his successors, however, to determine whether the transformation he set in motion will be sustained. The general set 2010 as the target to begin fielding new formations with new weapons and new capabilities for fighting with a new doctrine, a fielding that could continue for 20 more years.

When it came his turn at the retirement ceremony, General Shinseki mounted the podium to thank a myriad of people who had stood by him along the way and to remind all assembled that "soldiering is an honorable profession."



Shinseki reviewing troops in Japan

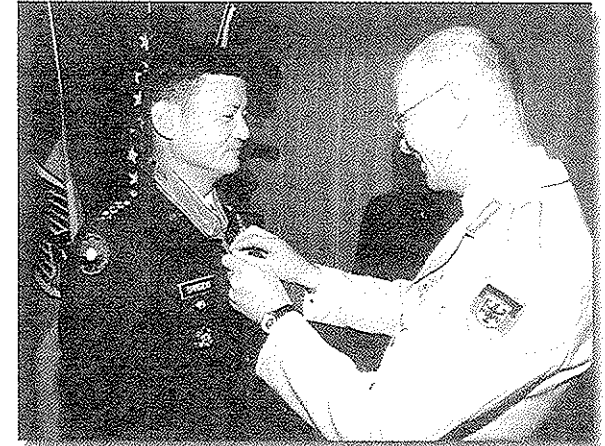
He reserved by far his most touching remarks for Mrs. Shinseki: "To

Patty, my wife of 38 years—you taught me the meaning of selflessness, of elegance, of courage, and of a bright spirit undiminished by time or adversity. You have seen me at my worst and stuck with me—and you've seen me at my best and chuckled in disbelief. Throughout it all, your patience, your balance, your encouragement, and your love and support have sustained me. You stood beside my hospital bed for days, helped me learn to walk a second time, enabled me to regain confidence and a sense of direction, helped me reestablish a professional career, moved our children and our household 31 times, and always, always provided great strength when it was needed most. You could have been and done anything you chose—yet, you chose to be a soldier's wife. The profound grace of that decision has blessed me immeasurably. Thank you for 38 wonderful years in a profession I loved nearly as much as you."

The retiring chief struck a philosophical note that drew on his 43 years in uniform and, at the same time, delivered a subtle rebuke to Secretary Rumsfeld, who was never mentioned, and to those in the Army who opposed his visionary approach. The chief thanked the generals who had preceded him, saying: "These leaders rose to their enormous task because they understood the

important distinction between command and effective leadership. They taught us, and we have taught others, that command is about authority, about an appointment to position—a set of orders granting title. Effective leadership is different. It must be learned and practiced in order for it to rise to the level of art. It has to do with values internalized and the willingness to sacrifice or subordinate all other concerns—advancement, personal well-being, safety—for others.

"So these men of iron invested tremendous time, energy, and intellect in leader development to ensure that those, who are privileged to be selected for command, approach their duties with a sense of reverence, trust, and the willingness to sacrifice all, if necessary, for those they lead. You must love those you lead before you can be an effective leader. You can certainly command without that sense of commitment, but you cannot lead without it; and without leadership, command is a hollow experience—a vacuum often filled with mistrust and arrogance.



Shinseki being decorated by a German general.

"Our mentors understood that mistrust and arrogance are antithetical to inspired and inspiring leadership—breeding discontent, fostering malcontents, and confusing intent within the force. And so our mentors worked to reestablish that most important of virtues in our Army: trust—the foundation upon which we have built our reputation as an Army. We owe them all a tremendous debt of gratitude for the magnificent Army we have today and the legacy of trust and honor they sustained."

Turning to the Army's operations in Iraq, General Shinseki said. "The current war brings me full circle to where I began my journey as a soldier—the lessons I learned in Vietnam are always with me. They involve changes in the way many of my generation learned to train, to lead, to fight, and to always offer our best military judgment to our superiors." The general pointed to his tenure as CSA: "Four years ago, with these lessons in mind, with the results of

our comprehensive Army transition assessment in hand, and with our eyes always on the dynamic strategic environment, we decided to undertake fundamental and comprehensive change. Those initiatives informed The Army Vision—a vision that consists of three imperatives: People. Readiness. Transformation.” Continuing, he said: “The Army Vision and Transformation are about comprehensive change at the very heart of our institution—of our culture: doctrine, organization, training, leader development, materiel, and soldiers. This is the message we have consistently reiterated to all who are listening.”

Expanding his philosophic theme, General Shinseki said: “Leadership is essential in any profession, but effective leadership is paramount in the profession of arms—for those who wear the uniform and those who do not...We understand that leadership is not an exclusive function of uniformed service. So when some suggest that we, in the army, don’t understand the importance of civilian control of the military—well, that’s just not helpful—and it isn’t true. The Army has always understood the primacy of civilian control—we reinforce that principle to those with whom we train all around the world. So to muddy the waters when important issues are at stake, issues of life and death, is a disservice to all of those in and out of uniform who serve and lead so well.” He contended that it was important for the Army not only to learn lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan but to learn the right lessons. “Even as we congratulate our soldiers when we welcome them home from battle, we must beware the tendency some may have to draw the wrong conclusions, the wrong lessons from recent operations—remembering all the while that no lesson is learned until it changes behavior. We must always maintain our focus on readiness. We must ensure the Army has the capabilities to match the strategic environment in which we operate, a force sized correctly to meet the strategy set forth in the documents that guide us—our National Security and National Military Strategies.

“Beware the 12-division strategy for a 10-division Army. Our soldiers and families bear the risk and the hardship of carrying a mission load that exceeds what force capabilities we can sustain, so we must alleviate risk and hardship by our willingness to resource the mission requirement. And we must remember that decisive victory often has less to do with the plan than it does with years invested in the training of soldiers and the growing of leaders. Our nation has seen war too many times to believe that victory on the battlefield is due primarily to the brilliance of a plan—as opposed to leadership, tactical and technical proficiency, sheer grit and determination of the men and women who do the fighting and the bleeding.”

The chief’s last words were for the soldiers who stand in the rear rank on parade but in the front rank on attack. “To soldiers past and present with whom I have served, you have my deep and abiding respect and my profound thanks. Soldiers represent what’s best about our Army and our nation—noble by sacrifice, magnificent by performance, and respected by all. They make us better than we ever expected to be. And for 38 years now, soldiers have never allowed me to have a bad day.”

After the ceremony, General and Mrs. Shinseki repaired to the officer’s club where they greeted friends for three hours. At the end of a long but fulfilling day, they went home to their children and five grandchildren. And the next morning, for the first time in many, many years, Ric Shinseki did not put on his dog tags to go to his post as a soldier.



Shinseki and wife Patricia.