

Foreword

In 1950, the great Soldier-Soldier-Statesman George C. Marshall, then serving as the Secretary of Defense, signed a cover page for a new book titled *The Armed Forces Officer*. That original version of this book was written by none other than S.L.A. Marshall, who later explained that Secretary Marshall had “inspired the undertaking due to his personal conviction that American military officers, of whatever service, should share common ground ethically and morally.” Written at the dawn of the nuclear age and the emergence of the Cold War, it addressed an officer corps tasked with developing a strategy of nuclear deterrence, facing unprecedented deployments, and adapting to the creation of the Department of Defense and other new organizations necessary to manage the threats of a new global order.

Now, in the second decade of the 21st century, our nation is again confronted with a volatile and complex security environment, and addressing the challenges of our time will place new demands on military leaders at all levels. We in the Profession of Arms will continue to adapt our training and education programs, as we have always done, to provide our officers with the intellectual and practical tools necessary to succeed in this unpredictable and unstable world.

The character of warfare may change over time, but its nature does not. As novel as much of the current security environment may seem, George C. Marshall’s wisdom still rings true today. Regardless of the challenges we face, our leaders, especially our officers, must share a moral foundation and practice a common professional ethic. Our tactics, techniques, and practices may change, but our bedrock principles remain the same.

This new edition of *The Armed Forces Officer* articulates the ethical and moral underpinnings at the core of our profession. The special trust and confidence placed in us by the Nation we protect is built upon this foundation. I commend members of our officer corps to embrace the principles of this important book and practice them daily in the performance of your duties. More importantly, I expect you to imbue these values in the next generation of leaders.

—Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.

*General, U.S. Marine Corps
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