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**Leadership Lessons from the Military**

Co-Sponsored by: Baylor Law Military Law Society

The roles of the military and the legal profession are essential in protecting our democracy. The sacrifices of military servicemembers ensure the freedoms Americans enjoy. The legal profession is charged with protecting the rule of law – the basis of our system of democracy – and advancing society toward “a more perfect union.” For lawyers in the military, the connection between the military and law is particularly evident. This panel discusses the military lawyer’s unique perspective on the role of the legal profession in society and give attendees some “lessons learned” that can be incorporated into their own practices and leadership programs.

**JAG Panel**

**Moderated by:**

**Donald J. Polden**

Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law, Santa Clara University School of Law

**Panelists:**

**Vice Admiral John G. Hannink**

Judge Advocate General, United States Navy

**Brig. Gen. R. Patrick Huston**

Assistant Judge Advocate General for Military Law and Operations, United States Army

**Lt. Gen. Jeffrey A. Rockwell**

Judge Advocate General, United States Air Force

Patricia Wilson: Well I am delighted to be here as Stephen indicated my name is Patricia Wilson and I am on the faculty here at Baylor Law School. As we continue the 2020 Vision for Leadership Conference, let me welcome you specifically to the panel on leadership lessons from the military. We are so pleased that you are able to join us, although, its virtual we are glad that you are here.

Journalist Elmer Davis who was the Director of the US Office of War Information during World [00:00:30] War II said, "This will remain the land of the free so long as it is the home of the brave." We are grateful for our brave men and women who serve our country and take an oath to support and defend the constitution. But the success of our soldiers is dependent on the men and women who lead them. And I look forward to hearing the perspective of these leaders that are here this morning.

We have a wonderful panel here today. And I am delighted to introduce them to you. Their complete and extensive bios are available on our Vision For [00:01:00] Leadership site. So to ensure we use the time we have for the panel discussion, I am going to keep my introductions short, but I do encourage you to read through their bios they are very accomplished group of leaders.

So first up, let me introduce Vice Admiral John Hannink. Admiral Hannink is the 44th judge advocate general of the Navy. He is a trained pilot who was well into his military career when he chose to attend law school graduating from Baylor 1994. [00:01:30] Currently, he is the principal military legal counsel to the Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations. He also leads the 2,300 attorneys, enlisted legalmen and civilian employees of the worldwide Navy Jag Corps community. Admiral Hannink thank you for being here.

Um, Let me next introduce Brigadier General R. Patrick Huston. General Huston is the Assistant Judge Advocate General for Military Law and Operations in the Pentagon. [00:02:00] In that role he oversees international legal engagements, criminal prosecutions and government appeals for the Army among other responsibilities. General Huston started his military career as an Army Ranger and a helicopter pilot. Excuse me, helicopter pilot in Europe before opting to attend law school and then becoming a military prosecutor in Korea. He has completed five combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan and has held numerous positions and assignments [00:02:30] in the Army. Thank you General Huston for being here.

We also have Lieutenant General Jeffrey Rockwell. He is a Judge Advocate General for the United States Air Force. In that capacity General Rockwell serves as the Legal Adviser to the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force and all officers and agencies of the Department of the Air Force. He directs all judge advocates and the performance of their duties and is responsible for the professional oversight of more than [00:03:00] 2,200 judge advocates 350 civilian attorneys as well as many other individuals, overseeing military justice at all levels of the Air Force command.

And finally, we have, let me introduce the moderator for this panel, Donald Polden. Mr. Polden I should say Dean Polden, is Dean Emeritus and professor of law at Santa Clara University School of Law. At Santa Clara, Dean Polden was instrumental in developing the curriculum for leadership [00:03:30] education. Dean Polden during his career has earned numerous accolades including his election to membership in the American Law Institute among others. I am delighted that he will be moderating this panel. So Dean Polden thank you for being here.

Before I turn it over, however, let me remind everyone that is here. You may post questions in the chat function. We will be monitoring the questions that you, you list or that you write up in the chat and forwarding the [00:04:00] questions to the panelists to answer depending how much time we have. I will come back about two minutes before the end of this session to help wrap it up, but without further ado let me turn it over to Dean Polden.

Donald Polden: Dean Wilson thank you very much for your introductions and our warm welcome to the Baylor leadership conference. I know I speak for all of our panelists and saying that we are excited to be here. This is a great topic, [00:04:30] an important topic in our times, the leadership and how lawyers can be better leaders. And that is especially true with our military lawyers as well. Without question the art and craft of leadership has been developed and advanced by military leaders over the many years. We say that leadership is for everyone but I think that's especially true in the military where [00:05:00] so many things depend on great affective leadership. Leadership from the top and leadership from the bottom.

So it is entirely appropriate that we would start this morning's panel at an integral part of the four day Baylor conference in learning about leadership from lawyer leaders. Some exceptional lawyer leaders that we have on our panel. This is a [00:05:30] topic that is dear to my heart. I grew up in a military family and my father retired as a Colonel in the Army and so over the years I learned from him lessons about great leadership and a few about not so great leadership. So, without more commentary on my part let me say good morning to all of our panelists. It's great to see you all again. [00:06:00] We have a short period of time to cover a lot of things. So, let me start off kind of warming up a little bit by getting personal a little bit and asking perhaps each of you if you would describe a great leadership experience that you had or that you witnessed. And I will start off with Admiral [00:06:30] Hannink. Exceptional leadership that you have seen or demonstrated or been a part of.

John Hannink: Thank you Don and I appreciate the question and you're moderating of the panel. I'll offer one example, I do it with a little bit of caution because sometimes I think we in the military think that its only senior leaders who

exhibit great leadership but the reality is that we see great leadership at the mid- [00:07:00] level and lower levels as well. It's just like you mentioned. But the example I'll give is of a senior leader.

Back in 2011, I was stationed at US Pacific Command which is a senior military staff in Hawaii in charge of the Pacific region. And the earthquake and tsunami in Japan had just happened. And we were in the midst of a [00:07:30] huge US military operation in full support of the Japanese military and the Japanese authorities. But as you can imagine in that kind of situation what to do, how to do it, and what to prioritize. There were a lot of thoughts on that and a lot of things that had to get done.

And my observation was that the four star admiral, that we work for, he was able to provide in very simple and [00:08:00] clear terms what his priorities were. And when he set those priorities out and when he talked to his staff and subordinate commanders you can see that everyone who has been thinking different things refocused on what needed to get done. And I think that ability in a crisis define clear guidance and to get the team aligned was one great example that I witnessed and I try to think of [00:08:30] when I might have my own situations that rise to some level of a crisis. Thanks.

Donald Polden: Thank you. Wonderful pertinent recollection story. General Huston.

Patrick Huston: Yeah. Thanks Don. Good morning everyone. It's great to be here. I really appreciate this opportunity. And I thought I would kick this off by telling a story about the best leader I have ever known. I know you said you can learn good lessons and bad lessons from leaders out there and that is absolutely true. In this [00:09:00] particular case I want to tell you about an amazing leader out there and then share five leadership lessons I learned from him.

But in order to do this we have to go back an embarrassing number of years to when I was a young helicopter pilot stationed in Europe. And we had a new boss arrive in our organization his name was Major Tom Young. He had an amazing reputation and I just want to share a few things that he did that an impression on me and I suspect a lot of the others around us. But the first [00:09:30] thing he did when he arrived and took over this unit was to look around our organization and he said to himself, hey this place is good, this organization is good, but not as good as they could be. And so he said they're just not performing at their full potential. So he set an ambitious goal. And he said listen in six months I want us to conduct the largest helicopter operation that has ever been conducted in Europe.

And so it was amazing to me how everyone just rallied behind this goal [00:10:00] and started working towards achieving this in six months. I was one of his planners, one of the people helping organize and plan for this. And every month we did something a little bit more complex, a little bit more with more helicopters involved. Ultimately we were trying to get this massive operation with more than 50 helicopters. But here are a couple more things about this. Before you do any big operation like this there is an air mission brief where somebody sits down all the pilots, all the crews and explains [00:10:30] exactly how this mission is supposed to go. And that's usually the Major but for something of this size I thought this was going to be the colonel. You know someone big was going to come in and do this operation.

But two weeks before the mission, Tom Young sat me down and said, all right you are going to give the intermission brief. And I was kind of stunned because this is not the sort of thing that some young 20 something year old lieutenant gives. But he said, yep you're going to do it but one week from now we are going to do a rehearsal. [00:11:00] But I'll tell yeah I was totally flattered that he had enough confidence in me that I would do this. I prepared for this like you wouldn't believe. I learned every single air route. I knew where all the refueling points were going to be. I knew all the call signs. I knew all the frequencies we were going to be talking in. I knew every contingency, everything that was going to happen and I prepared, and prepared, and prepared and I was ready.

So we did our rehearsal one week before the actual mission and I sat down and I went A-Z to give him this briefing that I was going to give to the pilots in another week. [00:11:30] And I hit everything. I showed him everything I knew and in my mind I had totally nailed it. And at the end of the briefing he looked at me and said that was terrible. And I thought he was kidding but I soon realized he wasn't. He said listen it's obvious that you worked hard and you prepared and you know the inside and outside of every aspect of this operation.

He said, but you got to think about it from the perspective of the audience. You've known this thing [00:12:00] for six months, you've lived it. But your audience is going to be hearing this for the first time. The first thing you need to do is explain this operation from A-Z exactly how you want things to happen with no emergencies, with no contingencies. So that they all have the vision of exactly how everything is supposed to go if the mission goes perfectly. Then, and only then, once they understand that, can you go back and work through all the contingencies. What happens if an airplane breaks down? What happens if there is an emergency? What [00:12:30] happens if there is loss communications?

Once he explained it to me, it made perfect sense. And I went back, I reconfigured my whole brief and everything went off fine. The briefing went fine and the mission went fine. But here are the five lessons that I learned from Tom Young through all of this. Number one is that a leader has to have a vision. He had this grand vision for this pursuit of excellence that was clearly communicated, everyone understood, everyone got on board and it was great.

[00:13:00] Two, you have to empower people to get the job done. He took a chance on some young lieutenant, me, to allow me to do something that I shouldn't, I had no business doing. And empowering subordinates I think you bring everyone further involved into the operation. Three, you have to provide candid feedback to folks. I needed to be told that my briefing was terrible. I didn't want to hear that, but I needed to hear it and I was much better for having heard that.

[00:13:30] Four you have to remember your audience and that lesson of pitching things in a clear manner that has stuck with me before every single trial I have ever had. And for all the lawyers out there you are going to know your case inside and out because you have been living it, but that jury is going to be hearing it for the first time. And you have to keep their perspective in mind and clearly explain things to the jury.

And fifth and finally I'll say you have to rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.  
[00:14:00] Everyone understands this, but we all think that as lawyers we are too expert to have to rehearse too much. We are too good at our job, but the truth is we all benefit from rehearsals everyone benefits from a rehearsal. Thanks Don.

Donald Polden: Great General. It certainly emphasizes the point is that vision is what leaders do. That's what they provide. So that is a great story. General Rockwell.

Jeffrey Rockwell: [00:14:30] Thanks. One of the great things about going third is that I get to think about what I'm going to say. I sat and I listened to General Huston about 12 stories went through my head over a span of 30 years so I am going to spend the next 50 minutes talking about those 12 stories. No instead of telling a story as I was thinking about this there was a common theme in those dozens of incidences of leadership that I saw. And [00:15:00] marketing back to what Admiral Hannink said it may not be a senior leader, it may not be a junior leader, it could be anybody in that. And a lot of times it is the most junior person. The common theme is this. It's courage.

It's somebody, and this is important in a military organization as you know coming from one. It's easy to just get into an execution mode. Where the

group, which we all operate as a service, which we all operate as a team. [00:15:30] The team tends to go forward and, of course, when you are going forward as a block like that, as a unit like that. When something isn't right, who has the courage to stand up and say hey something isn't right here. And that would be I think the common theme of all these dozens of stories, these leadership lessons. Of that ability to sort of buck against the system and say wait a minute, we ought to look at this a little harder. Something isn't right here. [00:16:00] And you can pick the subject matter and it's there.

The opposite corollary to that, of course, is when someone doesn't speak up. You can always see bad things happen. So for me, the leadership lesson learned, that I learned in my career and I don't care what rank you are, have the courage to say something. It's interesting our junior folks tend to have more courage than our senior folks sometimes. Which is why we really tap into them and let them lead as we sometimes learn to follow from them. [00:16:30] Over.

Donald Polden: Great. Thank you General. Those were great comments about influential leadership situations in each of your experiences. Let me ask a question that often arises with respect to lawyers in government or a kind of service. And that has to do with, if you are in private practice it's easy to [00:17:00] tell who your client is. It's the widow that comes in that needs a will administered or it's the defendant in a criminal case. Much more complicated I think for government lawyers. And I think it's especially more complicated for military lawyers. You have certainly chain of command, you have a set of responsibilities that the military has on [00:17:30] you for performance, for responsibility, for ethical comportment. Then there is also the rules that pertain to lawyers. So, could I ask for your thoughts about how you put together this notion of whose your client and how you serve your client and certainly situations where that becomes complicated. I thought this was an issue that was presented in an earlier conversation [00:18:00] by Admiral Hannink maybe I'll start by asking him to give his thoughts and then ask our two generals to do so as well.

John Hannink: Yeah thanks Don. The story I have goes along the theme of learning from subordinates. Last year I was up visiting at our Naval Justice School in Newport, Rhode Island talking to new lawyers up there going through basic lawyering courses. And one mentioned [00:18:30] a discussion that he had had with a law school professor. When they talked about a career and what area of the law, at the time, this law student wanted to go into. The professor gave what I thought was really good advice, which was don't worry about the area of law. Just ask yourself who do you want to serve. And when I think about that I think service and knowing your purpose [00:19:00] is a great, significant element of leadership.

And so we have the advantage, I believe that people who join the military services, they know what their overarching purpose is, they want to serve. What we often hear is them say on their way into the service, we wanted something for service above self, or we wanted to work in an organization that meant something more than just ourselves. But within [00:19:30] that, we know that the more immediate client base can be widely varied. And it can depend on which position our attorney is in. So, some are working what we call legal assistants, which is direct legal services for a sailor or family member. Often on a civil law matter, where you have to bring a certain set of competence directly for that client.

We'll have other clients being served by lawyers and those clients [00:20:00] might be going through an administrative or criminal type procedure within the military. As you can imagine, that presents its own level of conflicts, a little bit of conflict resolution or fighting within the system. And then there are other lawyers serving commanders. Commanders responsible for a mission, wanting to execute that mission, having to execute it within law, wanting to do the right thing. And so what we emphasize [00:20:30] is that they need to think about, within all rules of professional responsibility, who is the client and understand those rules and give that client zealous representation, and understand why you learned that in law school. There is no such thing as a small case or unimportant client.

But also within that, over zealous representation of the client, understand that their work does matter. Their work is making the contribution to [00:21:00] the reason why they joined which is the service to the nation and they service to the greater good. So it's the mix of those that we try and emphasize. You can't let go of the lawyer aspect but we also try to have them put their work into larger context and allow it to have that larger sense of purpose.

Donald Polden: Great. Thank you admiral. General Rockwell, some thoughts on that question about [00:21:30] the client and who's the follower in a sense or the leader.

Jeffrey Rockwell: Yeah. One of the best discussions we have at our JAG school, for instance, when we have our new lawyers coming in and they are trying to wrap their brains around this very complicated question you raise about who the client is. We have almost gotten to the point where we don't use the term client in the military anymore because like you said, who is the client? [00:22:00] Who are we serving? And you almost have to back it out further since we are a national security organization, we serve the nation. Therefore, we serve the constitution or we serve the law and the rule of law. It's very principled. As kids come out of school, they're in a sense

trained to serve a client. It's just our client is so different in the military that John alluded to and it is something more [00:22:30] principle.

Even when we advise commanders, I don't even use the word commanders anymore. My job is not to advise commanders it's to advise command. And this is where you get into really interesting conversations with commanders. "Boss I am not, I work for your chair, I work for the chair you sit in." [inaudible 00:22:57] and right now for a year or two. And [00:23:00] sometimes that goes over well and sometimes that doesn't go over well or you could imagine how we personalize things too much. But most good commanders in both air and space realize that it's just a service before self-thing. So when you advise them and you are advising the command and you're advising the chair they sit in, they get it because they want to do what's right under the law. I think the hard part [00:23:30] about this is when we have to peel out our JAG Corps to go serve individual clients if you will. Those accused of crime. Those who are victims of crimes, those who need legal assistance.

So we really have to work on keeping that mindset straight in the military. If it gets too complicated it's pretty simple in the military we wear uniforms and we wear patches and the patch says okay the United States Air Force is my client and [00:24:00] the United States Space Force is my client so that is how we uncomplicated it all Dean.

Donald Polden: I thought there was a purpose behind all the patches that my father wore and others. General Huston your thoughts on that subject of who you serve and how you train your lawyer leaders to figure [crosstalk 00:24:23].

Patrick Huston: Thanks Donald. I'll start by who I don't serve. My client is not the US Space Force. That's for sure. I'm not [00:24:30] nearly smart enough to even understand what the Space Force is. But I'll tell you this. I think it's a great question. Who's your client is really important. I've attended a couple of conferences of corporate counselor, general counsel, in-house counsel, and I was really shocked at how similar their roles are to the roles that we fill as organizational counsel in the military. They talked about how they never know what issue is going to come through the door each day. It could be a contract issue, it could be a regulatory issue, it could be a labor and employment [00:25:00] issue and I'm in there nodding my head saying, yes that's exactly what we see in the military.

A whole variety of issues that are out there. And they talk about the importance of understanding the whole team, the corporate C-suite and having influence in the planning process early on before they have to tell somebody no at the very 11th hour right before a merger or an acquisition. And I am thinking that is exactly what we do with our organizational clients, we have to get embedded with the staff, we have to build a trust,

we have to help [00:25:30] steer things in the right direction and we have to be prepared for a variety of issues that could come walking through the door in any day. So what I'll tell yeah is that it is really unique with an organizational client I think the key take away in both contexts is that it's not that individual CEO or that individual commander who's your client, it's the organization as a whole.

It's that corporation or it's that military organization, it's that service, it's the Space Force in the case of General Rockwell or the Army in my case. And it's [00:26:00] really interesting, that's enjoyable to have that perspective on things but then the military, the variety allows some of our attorneys, at times, go and advise individual clients. As General Rockwell indicated, you can defend an individual soldier at a court martial. You can prepare a will or a power of attorney for individual soldier or family member and it's incredibly satisfying to see the look on your individual personal client's face [00:26:30] when you can do that sort of work. So great variety of work out there, it depends on the situation but for the organizational clients it's really interesting work.

Donald Polden: Yeah. Great. Great discussion. Thank you all for your thoughts on that. General Rockwell kind of invited our discussion moved towards how the branches that you are in, the organizations that you are in train their lawyer leaders. That could begin at your JAG school, [00:27:00] it could be a part of a leadership manual that you have that is a part of an ongoing leadership development program as we all know training lawyers in leadership is sometimes a complicated area that doesn't seem to fit in our law school curriculum. Therefore, I think much more incumbent or important for the branches to be engaged in leadership training, education [00:27:30] and development. General Rockwell would you start us off please with some observations you have or descriptions as to how the Air Force develops leadership training in its lawyers.

Jeffrey Rockwell: I tell you Don I think it starts with what this is all about. What you are doing with Baylor. I think it's a realization that lawyers are not natural leaders. And we struggle [00:28:00] with this and we struggle with it, why? I think it is based on what we do. Tactically we work cases, from day one. We have issues and controversies and case controversies so we work issues. So we are very tactically oriented. And that's what we learn from an early stage and that's what we develop in our career and frankly that's what we love to do. We embrace issues and fix things. Sometimes that can keep you from evolving into [00:28:30] a strategic leader. You know, leader and strategic are synonyms.

Our approach in the Air Force, JAG Corps, I think it's probably similar, you will probably hear it from the other officers is it's a bit of a realization walking in that you are becoming a member of two professions. The

profession of arms and the profession of law. And with those two professions, [00:29:00] you have to be both a lawyer and you have to develop as a leader. And we tend to try very hard not to create these false dilemmas. Are you a lawyer or are you a leader? And to continue in the JAG Corps you have to develop both and how do we develop both. So there are two pathways as a member of the profession of arms and as a member of profession of law.

Through the JAG school they are going to be, for instance, [00:29:30] very focused. In our work we are going to be very focused on legal issues. And as you go through your career as a captain, then a major, then a colonel and perhaps further. You are focused on getting better at the law. And every legal course we have has a leadership piece to it. Similarly, as a member of the profession of arms you go through this professional military education that takes you through learning how to be a better [00:30:00] national security expert, a better officer. And as you go through that from captain to major and lieutenant colonel and colonel you studied leadership principles. But how do we as lawyers then sprinkle part of being a good lawyer with that?

So, at the end of the day what you are trying to do is take the gap and close it. And not create this false dilemma of are you a leader or are you a lawyer cause you need to be both. [00:30:30] And what we're trying to do here with having these symposiums and conferences like this of melding these two and bringing them together and not creating that false dilemma of either or. It's and, it's both. Over.

Donald Polden: Great. General Huston.

Patrick Huston: Thanks a lot Don. I appreciate that. I'm back. I'll tell you what, if I could take a slight spin off of this question, just a little bit. It's closely related and I'll tell you why. [00:31:00] I have had the privilege of serving on, what I'll describe as our partnership selection committee, multiple times. Where we are picking the people to be promoted about the eight year mark as an attorney they get promoted to major. And that is what we consider our equivalent of getting selected for partner. And I found that things that we are looking for are very similar to what law firms, in-house counsel, other legal organizations are looking for in their attorneys.

I'll tell yeah, I really [00:31:30] look for three things. And from what I found the first two things aren't going to surprise anyone but the third is probably going surprise people out there. So if any young attorneys out there in the audience or law students out there I want to share what I am looking for and what I think a lot of leaders are looking for in up and coming partners. The first thing, legal skills. Obviously, we're lawyers, we want expert lawyers, you need to be good at the law, if you want to move

up in law. So again, no surprise [00:32:00] there that you need to have great legal skills. The second thing is leadership skills and that is what this is about. This surprises some attorneys. Some think, hey if I'm just a good lawyer and I am practicing lawyer for several years I get better and better at the law. I become an expert in my field of law. That's enough.

But the truth is, if you are going to get promoted up and you are going to become a supervisory attorney, you are going to become partner that's responsible for managing associates, guiding associates, mentoring them in their careers, handing out tasks, ensuring that work [00:32:30] gets done. You need some leadership skills. This is what we are talking about. This is exactly why this conference exists. Help develop these skills across the legal profession. I could not be happier to see Baylor and others are doing on this front. But some attorneys just forget that's kind of an essential element if you want to move up in the legal profession and you want supervise other attorneys.

The third thing that I look for is the one thing that surprises most people. It's not complicated but I'll tell yeah it's [00:33:00] simple. Don't be a jerk. The truth is this is a team sport. You know, unless you are in a sole practice where you have no paralegal, no support staff and really no clients that you have to interact with you can't afford to be a jerk. We work as a group of people and I don't care how good of an attorney you are, you can be top of your class at Yale Law School and be a brilliant attorney who is contributing immensely in the legal field. If you are a jerk you are going to do more [00:33:30] harm than good to the rest of your legal organization. And nobody wants that, no one wants to contend with that. So, if you want to get promoted in any organization you can't be a jerk.

And for leaders I am going to add another twist. You can't allow jerks to continue in your organization because that is just infusing a cancer in your organization that is going to be trouble. Again, no matter how good that person is at a specific skill, you need to cut that out. So, don't be a jerk and don't tolerate those who are jerks.

Donald Polden: [00:34:00] That is great advice. Those interpersonal skills. They say leadership is very much a retail business. It's about persuasion and influence of others and if they find you objectionable cause you're a jerk that's going to be hard to lead them. Admiral Hannink your thoughts on how, your description of how the Navy develops leadership traits and abilities in its lawyers.

John Hannink: Yeah, Don Thanks. As I think [00:34:30] about our Navy leadership training over the years, one thought that comes to mind is it is varied. I think the military has focused on leadership, we need good leaders and we

have a lot of good leaders. But I think too often the training in the past has been focused on those who are going to or in specific positions. That are thought to be those that have great leadership in that. One other thing that we have had in the Navy is [00:35:00] on the formal leadership training aspect we've had initiatives over the years that gain traction but then after some period of time they lost out. Whether it because of competition with time or other resources and those leader or management development programs went away.

And that left a lot of people with on the job training, which is good, but in a military organization it can come to rely [00:35:30] on rank as sometimes invalid proxy for leadership abilities. And recently we've benefited from a formal framework the Navy put out. The Navy leader development framework and it describes the factors that go along with that framework its competency, character and connections. And the need for formal training, on the job training and [00:36:00] also a self-guided learning right through a career. And the Navy has a center called the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center in Newport, Rhode Island. That has become the center focus for our training and as judge advocates we try and be on the leading edge and gain as much as we can from that center.

So for example, General Huston mentioned about this eight year point, where we are picking people for that big great leadership [00:36:30] in the firm. And long standing we've had a course for those newly selected officers but in the past it focused a lot with judge advocates, teachers and mentors telling stories about leadership. About eight years ago we flipped that and we joined with Navy Leadership and Ethics Center to getting more formal discussion of [00:37:00] leadership approaches, personality assessments, discussions on leadership, self-awareness, team building, communications. And you wouldn't believe, or at least I didn't believe at the time just how incredibly positive that the feedback was.

Because most of those lawyers said why am I only learning about this now? I needed to know this years ago. And so the Navy fortunately has expanded that mid-level leadership focus. [00:37:30] We built in a leadership aspect for new lawyers who are coming out of our basic lawyer course. And we have also joined in with the Navy leader course for career officers at about the 17 year point. Thinking that if you didn't have something later in career an officer could go too many years without a touch point. And quite frankly the time to think about the profession, about ourselves, about our roles, [00:38:00] about our leadership is really critical.

So I think for us it's been a road towards appreciating the role that formal leadership training can play. In my view and it not only enables better

leaders but it enables better team members when you know all the pressures that a particular leader might be facing in a given situation.

Donald Polden: Great. Thank you. General Huston did you have another thing you'd like to offer [00:38:30] on this question? We'd appreciate it.

Patrick Huston: Yes. Thank you Don, I appreciate that. Admiral Hannink's comments just reminded me of the importance of early on education on leadership and as you know the military has the only ABA accredited law school in the federal government. And all of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marine judge advocates have an opportunity to go there and work on this. I had the privilege in my last job to be the commander there and we established a leadership [00:39:00] center that I know you've been part of that has allowed...

John Hannink: I have?

Patrick Huston: What we try to do is infuse this leadership at every step along the way. And that leadership center has taken and said, listen even our brand new attorneys need to have some of these lessons and infuse it in there. And infuse it in their mid-career and later in the career. A couple of the key lessons that we've tried to commit all along, three of them really. First is just the striking that balance that simple balance between getting the job done and taking care of people. [00:39:30] There is always tension between those but that is what we try and do. The second point on there is kind of clear communications with our clients. Our clients don't want to hear an Iraq type response. They're not going to go through that, we need to get the bottom line up front with clients so communicating with clients is a key to legal but also a leadership skill that's out there.

And third and finally it goes back to what General Rockwell hit upon early on which is the notion of principle legal counsel I have never [00:40:00] billed a single hour in my life. I've never had the pressure of trying to work for profit or trying to bring in clients being a rainmaker at our firm. We can focus on just doing the right thing and we want to ensure that our attorneys understand the importance of that. That's part of leadership at every stage and we try and teach all the lawyers as we go. Thanks a lot.

Donald Polden: Great. Thank you. I have a question that is from our audience here that is directed [00:40:30] to Admiral Hannink, but I think all three of our panelists may have a sense about this and it's interesting question. I don't think it's a trick question at all Admiral. The question is which is harder leading one of the largest law firms in the world, which I think you all do, or landing an electronic warfare jet on the pitching deck of a moving aircraft carrier. [00:41:00] I think all three of our panelists have been up in

the air as a part of their military work but what do you think admiral in terms of complexity, difficulty, and importance?

John Hannink:

I think to give an answer I'll have to have ask a question. Are you talking about day time or night time? If you are talking about night time then I would pick the at-sea landing. Day time maybe [00:41:30] not. I'll share with you just a thought on this idea of leaving a large law firm. You know when people talk to me they hear that the Navy judge advocate generals court, we have about 950 lawyers, about 500 uniform paralegals and we have several hundred civilian lawyers, paralegals, administrative support personnel. They say wow that's a big firm and in one sense it is.

But I [00:42:00] have to go about my business also keeping in mind that we have lawyers and paralegals all over the globe. And they are with many different units and many different commands and to most of them, from their day to day perspective, it looks like a small firm or a solo practice. And so, one of the real challenges for us is to be sure that the training is in place. And be sure that they have reach back and [00:42:30] be sure that they alone and unafraid feeling like they are landing on the back of the carrier at night. And keeping the team together even though it's really extended. And I think that large firms, small firm context, again, it's important for me to keep in mind and all our practitioners to keep in mind.

Donald Polden:

Great. Thank you. General Rockwell.

Jeffrey Rockwell:

[00:43:00] It's an interesting dilemma that's been raised and one that I'll, like I call every dilemma, it's a false one. I happen to work for greatest damn STEM organization in the world. Look at the department of Air Force with Space Force and the Air Force under it, it is full of scientific, technological, engineering, mathematical geniuses. And [00:43:30] when you think about the practice of law not necessarily that side of the brain it's really the other side of the brain. And my brain is wired to be a STEM thinking person. So I struggle with anything in the law because my brain is not wired like that.

What that's taught me over the years with this false dilemma that the question raises is what's easier? It's not what's easier its identifying what's harder and then go do that. [00:44:00] And at the end of the day with a practice of law whether you are practicing in a STEM organization or you're practicing in the other side of your brain, whatever you are doing is a reconciliation and a use of both sides of the brain. And that is what kind of gets you to where you need to be. So it's hard for me to foray into the artsy side of things and dammit I have been trying to get good at it for the last 30 years and I'm not good at it yet. And that's the trick though, you [00:44:30] use every bit of that gray matter you got between your ears.

Donald Polden: General you emphasize the important point that we say in leadership education. Leadership is a process and so for 30 years you have been working that process obviously successfully. General Huston you have a thought on this. You were up in the air flying around, you know the complexity, the danger...

Patrick Huston: Don if you [00:45:00] knew my history as a pilot and all the mishaps I had you wouldn't be asking me, you wouldn't be bothered asking for my input. But I am a little skeptical and unlike you I think it was a trick question, but I am also an optimist and have full confidence in Admiral Hannink's and General Rockwell's ability to lead their respective JAG Corps at day or in the night. No issues on either one or even landing on carriers anywhere out there. Rather than saying what's harder I'd say what's more satisfying. [00:45:30] And especially to the law students or the young lawyers out there the Army JAG Corps, like the other JAG Corps, we're big. We have over 5,000 lawyers in the Army alone. It's a big organization, we are one of the largest, the oldest, and most diverse legal teams that are out there.

But for the lawyers that are out there, the law students that are out there I'll ask if you went to law school for the money or the luxury and you want a big sprawling office overlooking Manhattan. We are not the law firm for you. None of us are. [00:46:00] But if you want adventure and you want to do some really meaningful legal work for really important clients, you want to be part of a team then I'd say anyone of these JAG Corps would be a good fit for you and you ought to think about it.

Donald Polden: Great. Thank you. That helps us move a little bit to another area you all are leaders of lawyer leaders. [00:46:30] I'm interested in the context of the lawyers that are coming to your branches in the military. I started teaching leadership for lawyers 15 years ago and I looked around and I couldn't see any law schools that were developing courses or programs in lawyer leadership for law students. And that has changed and there are many more schools like Baylor and others that have been [00:47:00] working in the area of creating some text and context for this notion that lawyers need to be leaders and have leadership skills.

My guess is that most of the new lawyers that come to your JAG departments have not had any leadership training or development. Perhaps if they went to business school before law school they would [00:47:30] have but probably not in law school. So, that presents kind of an educational challenge in terms of bringing them along in that. So my question is about your advice, your recommendation to law schools, law development, law education programs. Should we be doing more for all lawyers not just those going into the military? Is [00:48:00] really leadership development for lawyers something that is critical for our

country, for your organizations, for the legal profession. I'll ask General Huston to start off if that's okay.

Patrick Huston: Yeah. I'd be delighted. I think the short answer is yes. Absolutely yes. Don you have been a pioneer in this area starting this legal leadership training 15 years ago way [00:48:30] ahead of from a visionary approach to this. But the answer is we need this. Now, everyone has some informal training. We have coaches, teachers, parents, professors and you learn leadership along the way but a formal school of leadership, a formal approach is really essential within the legal profession because there are some specific things that lawyers need to know about leadership that are a little bit different then the basic leadership principles out there. So [00:49:00] I would say yes, follow the lead of Baylor. I told you that we are way behind although we just established our leadership center a year ago. But we are getting there and we are trying to do our best and I think every law firm or every law school ought to consider weaving formal leadership training as part of the curriculum.

Donald Polden: Okay. Thank you. Admiral.

John Hannink: Don I think the law is about society and society is about people. Their [00:49:30] relationships, their organizations, conflict resolutions then absolutely. Leadership and teamwork has got to be part of the education. I just think of the feedback we got from our lawyers when we started formal leadership training and they could not get enough of it. Now I think our beginning lawyers, it can be a little bit tempting for us to think that we want to pick the leaders. My personal view is that we need to be a little bit careful [00:50:00] in that because if you try to do that you just might pick the stereotypes. And I think we need to be open, in the military we have many different kinds of people that have many different types of leaders. And I think that emphasizes though rather than minimizes the importance of a leader development program.

Let people understand themselves, let people understand where they can make a contribution, let them understand, yes their personality preferences but there's a range in which they operate, let them grow their [00:50:30] skill sets. Then over time, we need to let them, and help them learn the context of the practice of law. And that brings into play the leader development throughout the career kind of idea. But, I agree in my view the early one starts and has the appreciation for leadership the better.

Donald Polden: Terrific. Thank you admiral. General Rockwell your thoughts on lawyer leadership training in law school?

Jeffrey Rockwell: [00:51:00] There's a lot of commonality and maybe you'll be offended by this. There is a lot of commonality between the military and academia and

it has to do with mentorship. When we get new lawyers in who just got out of school, for instance, they are 25, 26 years old what they talk about the most is how they were mentored in school by this professor, that professor. Mentoring is leadership. We pick up on that and we mentor them the same way. [00:51:30] So the transition for them, especially right out of law school and into the military is relatively easy because what they're looking for... How do you learn leadership, through a mentorship. And the mentorship they get from professors and what they are taught in school is similar to what they get when they join the military. I think we take it to another level because we're probably one of the only institutions that has a duty to train its replacements. And that's the psyche across all the services. And despite [00:52:00] the money isn't the same, it's people who crave that.

The difficulty even with the similarities is the age demographic. When you're young, you are training to a point where you hope a light goes on in somebody's head later on because they may not be able to embrace the strategic nature of leadership principles. The strategic nature of the overall legal framework and the leadership that's so important and [00:52:30] so a part of that because they are just learning how to work with facts and issues and do those things. But as you said earlier, it's a journey, it's a process and when people can step back and see that they are part of a process that light may go on in their head later on, those leadership principles and they have to be principle its critical.

The last thing I would say is we have to overcome in that process is this tendency to over specialize. [00:53:00] We do it, the law schools do it, you have to get an LLM in an area to be a good lawyer. And that tends to slow your revolution as a leader down because you think you need to have a specific degree in, in a specific area of the law rather than focus on the process and the critical analysis of law that transitions you from that tactical to that strategic type leader both in the law. Over.

Donald Polden:

Great. [00:53:30] Great comments, all of you. Thank you it's certainly encouraging to me as somebody teaching in this area that you have this same sort of inspiration that I do, or that your fellow travelers and we're on a path together here. We have a great question here from Dean Wilson and it's not a question as whether the four of us are going to be able land this promptly at 9 o'clock. She asks, everyone is a follower [00:54:00] at some time in their career and particularly in the military given the clear chain of command. What lessons have you all learned from being in the follower role or position that helped you as a leader? Followership is a part of the military certainly it's a part of leadership. Let me ask General Rockwell to start us off here.

Jeffrey Rockwell: Yeah, [00:54:30] I think it starts with the realization of your weakness. That being in this profession. And I won't make the distinction between leading and following. Think about what it takes to be a member of the profession of arms and law? Think about what a typical lawyer does? First thing is they start talking. They don't listen they talk. They charge by the spoken word, charge by the written word. And so we're predisposed not to listen, we talk. [00:55:00] As a member of the profession of arms, where you learn from day one to act. You have to act, you have to give orders, you have to give guidance, you have to give intent. And so that leads you to talking. Both of those things really highlight your weakness.

Whether you are in a leadership or a followership role. Shut up and listen. If you actively shut up and listen to people you can actually get input to make smarter decisions and that has nothing to do with you are leading or following [00:55:30] except when you are in a leadership position. You have to actually remind yourself more to shut up and listen, you'll make better decisions and everyone will input and be included those decisions. Over.

Donald Polden: Great advice. Thank you. General Huston your thought about Dean Wilson's question.

Patrick Huston: Yeah. I think it's a great one, because we are all are often simultaneously followers and leaders. Everyone has leaders they're looking for and as we talked about before you can learn good lessons [00:56:00] and bad lessons from leaders that are out there. Whether they're your immediate supervisor or they are someone you are watching on TV, it doesn't matter you can learn and we all do learn from that. I'll also I really, really liked General Rockwell's comment about, shut up and listen, because I think I'm going to shut up and just listen to what Admiral Hannink has to say.

Donald Polden: Passing it over Admiral. Your thoughts on this subject, followership?

John Hannink: On that, two thoughts. One is many of our [00:56:30] offices particularly if they are working for a command and what we call a staff judge advocate will have a lead staff of judge advocate that heads the office and then we'll have the deputy who's the more junior judge advocate in the office. To this question I think two things. One is I think no one should be disappointed at being the deputy because in my view it's a real luxury. To have the chance to learn [00:57:00] from someone. Particularly if there's a situation on the context that is not in your skill set yet. And for someone to be able to watch and learn so you're ready when you move off to be the primary judge advocate. Again, I think that is great luxury.

The second thing is, that because it's a luxury that you can sit back because the importance of leading up is apparent in many roles. But I

think in the [00:57:30] law offices it has been mentioned here before that you can't sit by silently. You got to lead up, you got to lead your contemporaries, you got to help your senior leaders get to the right decision. And I think doing that by itself with help hone someone's leadership skills to make them more ready for the future. Again, I think in this area to keep points beyond leadership, you got to be available, and be willing and number two you got to be ready. You got to be ready [00:58:00] to step up when you're called.

Donald Polden: Great. Thank you. Thank you all for your comments on that. I'm getting a message here that we are supposed to wrap it up so at this point we'll turn it over to Dean Wilson who has magically appeared on our screens here. It's nice to see you again and before you wrap up I would like to personally thank our three officer lawyers, lawyer leaders who are here with us today. It's [00:58:30] been a great honor for me to be a part of this panel and to work with you on this so thank you from me personally and I know Dean Wilson is going to emphasize that for Baylor. Dean.

Patricia Wilson: Thank you all for being here this was a fabulous panel discussion. I think I particularly like the very, I suppose, short statement, don't be a jerk. There is lots of good information in there but boy does that really sum it up. So, thank you again I am sorry that our time has come [00:59:00] to a close but it was wonderful information there will be some follow up from all of our participants and so I am going to turn it over to Stephen who will talk about the next session. Okay, well if not, then I will continue on. We are going to take a brief break I suppose where the next session will not start until 12:30 eastern time, 11:30 central, 2: [00:59:30] 30 mountain and 9:30 pacific, but we will be doing The Leadership of Differences so definitely please come back. Stephen is something you need to tell the participants.

Stephen Rispoli: That's it. Nailed it, Professor Wilson. Thank you.

Patricia Wilson: All right. Thanks again everyone for being here. And we will hopefully see everybody back at the next session in a little over, I guess, an hour and a half.

Donald Polden: Thank you. Bye bye.