

Harold G. Moore Quotes on Leadership

“In the American Civil War, it was a matter of principle that a good officer rode his horse as little as possible. There were sound reasons for this. If you are riding and your soldiers are marching, how can you judge how tired they are, how thirsty, how heavy their packs weigh on their shoulders? I applied the same philosophy in Vietnam, where every battalion commander had his own command-and-control helicopter. Some commanders used their helicopter as their personal mount. I never believed in that. You had to get on the ground with your troops to see and hear what was happening. You have to soak up firsthand information for your instincts to operate accurately. Besides, it’s too easy to be crisp, cool and detached at 1, 500 feet; too easy to demand the impossible of your troops; too easy to make mistakes that are fatal only to those souls far below in the mud, the blood and the confusion.” —from ***We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young***

“There’s always one more thing you can do to influence any situation in your favor – and after that one more thing, and after that. ... The more you do, the more opportunities arise.” —from ***We Are Soldiers Still: A Journey Back to the Battlefields of Vietnam***

“A commander in battle has three means of influencing the action: Fire support ...; his personal presence on the battlefield; and the use of his reserve.” —from ***We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young***

“May God bless and keep all soldiers, young and old, and may that same God open the eyes of all political leaders to the truth that most wars are a confession of failure – the failure of diplomacy and negotiation and common sense and, in most cases, of leadership.” —from ***We Are Soldiers Still: A Journey Back to the Battlefields of Vietnam***

“Only first-place trophies will be displayed, accepted or presented in this battalion. Second place in our line of work is defeat of the unit on the battlefield and death for the individual in combat. No fat troops or officers. Decision-making will be decentralized: Push the power down. It pays off in wartime. Loyalty flows down as well. I check up on everything. I am available day or night to talk with any officer of this battalion. Finally, the sergeant major works only for me and takes orders only from me. He is my right-hand man.” —from ***We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young***

“These times, indeed all times, demand national political leaders who know not only our history but the history of the world and its nations and peoples. We need leaders of principle, courage, character, wisdom and discipline.” —from ***We Are Soldiers Still: A Journey Back to the Battlefields of Vietnam***