

OF COMPETENCE AND CHARACTER: A NEW JERSEY STORY PASSED ON FROM FATHER TO SON



By: George J. Wren, Jr.

ANYONE who can recall the Gulf War of January 1991 knows of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf – United States Army (*Retired*). Yet, only a handful know anything about his father, Herbert, who in his own right was also a great military leader. In his autobiography with Peter Petre, *It Doesn't Take A Hero*, USA: Bantam, 1992, General Schwarzkopf shares many of the lessons he learned from his father, all of which focused upon maintaining the highest level of competence and character throughout his lifetime. Together, with research I conducted for my book *Jersey Troopers II: The Next 35 Years (1971-2006)*, USA: iUniverse, 2009, and a personal interview I had the honor of conducting with General Schwarzkopf on October 2, 2006, I offer you this insight on their *Father/Son* relationship.

His earliest memories of his father are those which molded integrity. He was only six when President Roosevelt called up the National Guard in preparation should the hostilities in Europe escalate. That November 1940 was a time when a young H. Norman Schwarzkopf had little else to worry about, other than playing with dogs, sledding downhill, and eagerly awaiting the arrival of Christmas. But for his father, Colonel Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf, life had always been a bit more disciplined and serious.

The only child of second generation German immigrants, Herbert's parents made it a point of preserving their German heritage, but at the same time they were very proud of their American citizenship, making sure that it was prominent in everything they did. As he grew up, Herbert enjoyed the same activities as other children, except, he maintained the disciplined, no-nonsense disposition of his German forefathers.

Herbert attended neighborhood schools and experienced a short stint in military training while he attended the New Jersey Military Academy in Bordentown. Like his father, Herbert dropped the use of his first name when his friends began calling him a nickname he despised, "Bertie." From that point on he would only be known as H. Norman Schwarzkopf. After graduating from Barringer High School in Newark, Herbert was granted a Congressional appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point from the Honorable Walter I. McCoy, Judge of the Supreme Court in Washington D.C. As ordered, Herbert reported to the academy on June 14, 1913.

At West Point, Herbert was an average student, who became very much involved in the physical programs. Not unlike the rest of his classmates, he gained a genuine respect for rules and regulations, a respect acquired while completing punishment guard duty known as, "walking the area." This respect became greatly enhanced by his no-nonsense, disciplined demeanor, and remained steadfast in his firm belief in their creed of "*Duty, Honor, Country*," the West Point motto.

His love for horseback riding was a passion certainly befitting his leadership and sense of honor, a passion which definitely suited him, affording him great success as an Academy Cavalryman. Understandably so, when he graduated from West Point on April 20, 1917, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and posted with the 2nd Cavalry at Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont.

Within a month, Herbert was promoted to First Lieutenant at the 2nd Cavalry, a Regiment bolstered with National Guard troops. In November 1917, he received a temporary appointment as an Acting Captain in the 18th Cavalry. Regrettably, shortly thereafter, World War I dictated that the Regiment be converted into the 76th Field Artillery and sent to Camp Shelby for training.

In May 1918, the Regiment arrived in France and became part of the newly formed 3rd Division of the American Expeditionary Forces. After completing their training on the French 75 field artillery, the men of the Regiment joined the Division along the Marne River in June 1918 where their resolve and training would soon be tested.

On July 15, 1918, they experienced their first engagement at Champagne. Skilled German grenadiers assaulted their positions, ultimately destroying their guns during a vicious fight. Unafraid, they retrieved abandoned artillery left behind by retreating French soldiers, and maintained support of their fellow infantrymen. The gallantry exhibited by the Division during the extremely fierce engagement bestowed on them the honor of being known thereafter as the "Rock of the Marne." Now proven, the defenders attacked the Germans at Aisne and Saint Mihiel, and drove them back to their original lines. Unfortunately, it was during these assaults that Lieutenant Schwarzkopf fell victim to the perils of mustard gas.

While recuperating, the young lieutenant reflected on his principles and their applications by the American commanders. Strongly influenced by General John J. Pershing, Schwarzkopf

realized that the measure of a commander and every soldier was exhibited through Pershing's demands that the high standards of the Corps of Cadets be applied to all throughout the American Expeditionary Forces.

Following the November 11, 1918 Armistice, the 3rd Division entered the homeland of his grandparents with the Army of Occupation. His expertise of the German language and customs led to his assignment as Provost Marshall in the vicinity of Coblenz, along the Rhine River, where the 3rd Division remained until August 1919. There he served as mayor and civil judge without major incident. During the occupation he also served in the Army Transport Service and the Graves Registration Service. All of which greatly prepared him for an unknown future when he ultimately would return to New Jersey.

After returning home for a short leave, Lieutenant Schwarzkopf's next posting placed him back into a saddle with the 7th Cavalry at Fort Bliss, Texas. His appointment to Assistant Provost Marshall quickly earned him the reputation for being firm, but fair. His established unwritten rule allowed a man one mistake, but a recurrence of a similar offense may be considered intentional and punishable as such. In June 1920, Lieutenant Schwarzkopf was promoted to Captain of the Cavalry, ending his long anticipated three year wait for permanent promotion. In that capacity he was appointed Border Patrols Commander, El Paso District.

Herbert had come a long way in his military career. West Point reinforced the fundamental principles that his father Julius had taught him. Principles the Schwarzkopf family lived by. Julius was always the principle male member of the Schwarzkopf family, a brilliant man, eloquent with great intelligence. But, in the early summer of 1920, Julius became crippled as a result of disabling arthritis which confined him permanently to a wheelchair. Unable to support his parents on Army pay, Captain Schwarzkopf resigned his commission from the Army on July 15, 1920, before assuming his new command, and returned to New Jersey to care for his parents.

Once back in New Jersey, Herbert took a position with the Louis Bamberg & Company department store in Newark. Politics in New Jersey at that time was very territorial and powerful. The State Police Bill had become a very confrontational issue, resulting in the governor's veto being overturned by both houses. It appeared that neither the legislature nor the governor would ever come to comprise as to who would get their choice. None of this really matter to Herbert, and he showed no real interest in the outcome. A few months after the bill was passed, Herbert was encouraged to apply for the position of Superintendent by a friend and fellow officer from World War I, Captain Irving Edwards, the governor's son. Captain Edwards also approached his father and advised him there was someone in particular that he should look at to fill the important position.

Impressed with his military leadership, discipline and independent demeanor, Governor Edwards realized that he had met the most qualified man for the job and nominated Herbert in

short order. Many in the press were skeptical and some supportive. As in some of its predecessor organizations and their leaders, this new, New Jersey State Police would be unique based on the personality of its leader. In making that statement the Jersey Journal boldly prophesied that the new Department would be “Schwarzkopfian” in design.

On July 1, 1921, twenty-five year-old Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf was sworn in as the first Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. The legislature had enacted a



comprehensive State Police Bill that established specific conditions on how the Department of State Police would be administered. That was all well and fine, but the new Superintendent, a West Point graduate, commissioned Calvary officer, and decorated war veteran would lead the Department, and lead it his way. In keeping with the spirit of the Act, Herbert decided that the Department would follow along strict military principles and guidelines. Not all that dissimilar from training officers for a national army, the troopers that would make up the State Police would do so along a strict training regimen specifically designed for the needs of state policing. But, make no doubt about it, Schwarzkopf’s condensed training program would certainly include many of the rigors and character building he experienced at West Point.

The new Superintendent personally scrutinized each and every applicant and devised each phase of the selection process. Appointments to this new Department would not come at the behest of political favoritism. Every applicant would proceed through Schwarzkopf’s selection process, a process structured to disqualify all but the most qualified. Every man would earn his place, and earn it he would!

Remembering his position and that of the organization, Schwarzkopf reiterated to the officers that he “must be personally assured that they will not go out and make fools of themselves.” Of utmost importance, the men were to be trained to maintain their dignity and always remain courteous. They would have a thorough knowledge of the lengths of their authority, placing great emphasis on their military discipline. The men would learn to function as a unit, and be able to display the requisite individual initiative and confidence to function as lone representatives of the force. Additional training in the ways of policing was supplemented during the training program by seasoned police officers, some of which were sent from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Pennsylvania State Police.

Satisfied that the men had been adequately trained and properly outfitted, Colonel Schwarzkopf and his men broke camp on December 5, 1921, and began their first patrol as Troopers of the New Jersey State Police. Colonel Schwarzkopf had personally chosen and trained the men under his own conditions. Not all completed the training program. Of the 116 who reported to the training camp three months earlier, only eighty-one including himself and his four commissioned officers remained. Those that were sworn in on September 5th knew the expectations of their Colonel. They had all repeatedly experienced his code of honor and sense of discipline, and they all had listened to his sermons and knew his gospel, as though their training had been a religious experience. But, before they departed Sea Girt they were each issued a copy of General Order #1 which established the policy of the organization. It was a lengthy written order designed to be informing, instructive, encouraging, and restrictive of the men.

When they started out, there were no formal rules or regulations. Military discipline ran the Outfit and the Colonel issued orders and instructions according to the situation at hand. As time passed more structured orders would be written, but as they headed out on that first patrol they each knew that in order to remain in the State Police they would have to live up to the standards established by Schwarzkopf.

Colonel Schwarzkopf had organized and led the Department of State Police for fifteen years. Throughout his tenure he was able to remain somewhat free from the political influences he knew would threaten the core of the organization. Serving under five different governors of both political parties his record remained steadfast towards, "Making sure you are RIGHT, then go ahead, regardless." His perception that political interference could not produce that conclusion in a police organization proved to be right, and unfortunately, when push came to shove the elected politician held the trump card, removing him from office. Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf led the New Jersey Department of State Police with a confidence and character he would now begin to pass on to his young son.

After resigning his Army commission in 1920, Herbert immediately made application to join the Nation Guard and was accepted as a commissioned Captain. Throughout his tenure in the State Police, and then as a private citizen he kept up his Guard service. In January 1924, he was promoted to Major and assigned to the Military Police, Reserve Officers Corps. In January 1939, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, New Jersey National Guard, and shortly thereafter in November 1940, his unit was activated and assigned to Camp Kilmer. It was during this time when a young H. Norman Schwarzkopf received his first lessons in integrity.

General Schwarzkopf recalled that while away throughout the week at Camp Kilmer, his father returned home only on the weekends. For the young H. Norman, this was the norm, making the weekends a cherished time spent with his father. With his father away during the week, it was up to his mother Ruth to settle disputes. However, when his father returned home on Friday evenings, it proved to be a time of great reckoning, depending on what his mother

disclosed. If H. Norman and his sisters Ruth Ann and Sally had been good, they received metals from an ample supply his father had won over the years. It didn't matter that the inscription might say, "Left-Handed Pistol Champion, New Jersey State Police 1925." Besides, the young H. Norman couldn't read anyway (5).

However, during one week, Ruth found burnt matches and sticks in the snow alongside their garage and confronted her son. He denied knowing anything about it. That Friday evening she reported the incident to her husband who handled it father-to-son. Sitting together on a loveseat in the parlor, Herbert advised his son that he knew about the fire, and that he was worried that he would hurt himself, or burn down the house. As he addressed his son he pulled out his lighter, lit a cigarette, held out the lighter, and asked, "If you want to play with fire and burn yourself, you might as well use this lighter and put your hand in the flame right now. Do you want to do that?"

"No," replied a regretful H. Norman.

"Good, I want you never to play with matches again."

Then, the subject immediately changed to the importance of honor. "No matter what happens, no matter how bad a situation is, no matter what you think the consequences will be if you tell the truth, an honorable man does not lie. A Schwarzkopf does not lie" (6).

In February 1941, LTC Schwarzkopf was promoted to Colonel, Army of the United States and assigned to Fort Hancock, one of a series of installations that guarded the approach to the Port of New York. While at Fort Hancock, Colonel Schwarzkopf had an occasion to escort his young son around the military encampment and his personal quarters. It was there that those young impressionable eyes fixated on a book that sat upon his father's nightstand. He listened intently as his father explained how he was studying the book, because much that was taking place in the world had been written about by its author who was a very bad man. The book, *Mein Kampf* had been written by Adolph Hitler (9).

In June 1942, Colonel Schwarzkopf was summoned to meet with General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff in Washington D.C. In the mist of delivering military aid to Stalin's Soviet soldiers, too many shipments weren't making it through the wilds of Iran. The policing of Iran fell upon the national police force called the Imperial Iranian Gendarmerie. Unfortunately, the Gendarmerie was a disorganized and poorly trained force that had little effect on policing the vast wilds of Iran. As such, General Marshall ordered Colonel Schwarzkopf to Tehran as an advisor to the Gendarmerie in an effort to improve their effectiveness and training. He accomplished the assignment with great success after patterning the reorganization, training, and operations of the Gendarmerie after that of the New Jersey State Police. But before he departed for Tehran, Colonel Schwarzkopf saw fit to bestow upon his son a great responsibility.

It was August 1942, there in the back yard of their Lawrenceville, New Jersey home on the evening before his departure, and in the presence of his wife, the Colonel stood before his son and explained how he was about to leave home in the service of his country. But before leaving, he had a big job he required his son to handle in his absence. It would be up to him to look after the girls in his father's absence, because men were the protectors of women.

As a demonstration of his confidence in his seven year-old son's ability there was something that he wanted him to have. With that, he retrieved his Army saber from inside the house, and while holding it before his son he said, "I'm placing this sword in your keeping until I come back," and laid it in his son's hands. "Now I'm depending on you. The responsibility is yours."

That saber was a sacred object in the Schwarzkopf home. His father received it upon graduating from West Point in 1917, and he was always quick to tell anyone that West Point had shaped his entire life. *Duty, Honor, Country*, the West Point motto was his creed, one that also would become his son's (1).

In the summer of 1945, Colonel Schwarzkopf returned home from Iran on a month long leave. Now at ten years-old, his son was coming of age to expand his horizons and asked that he be sent away to a military school like his father had attended. That September, H. Norman followed in his father's footsteps and entered the sixth grade at the Bordentown Military Academy. Marching to the program his father had set out for him he thrived - academically, athletically, and militarily. He enjoyed the structure and focus that the formal disciplined academy had to offer, and he excelled under it (24).



The following summer his father who had just been promoted to Brigadier General, decided that since the war was over it would be good for his son to join him in Iran and experience the wilds and teachings of a foreign country. There under the personal guidance of his father, he would learn the lessons expected in a far away land, primarily those of honor and respect. His father had been away for four long years, and the young Schwarzkopf craved the opportunity to be with his idol. Then, on his twelfth birthday, August 22, 1946, Major Dick Walters who was to join General Schwarzkopf's staff pulled up at the curb in a white sedan to begin their journey. Sticking his suitcase in the back of the car and kissing his mother good-bye, they departed. That day marked the start of his military career. From that point on, H. Norman Schwarzkopf lived in an Army world (25).

Once he arrived in Tehran, H. Norman cherished the time he spent with his father. Some evenings, they would just sit around a small oil stove and talk about all sorts of things – people they had met, experiences they witnessed on the streets, his volleyball team at school, the Iranian parliament, recent clashes between the gendarmes and bandits. They'd talk about military topics,

about West Point, about honor. His father would confide in him about men in his command, officers he admired who were selfless and loyal, and others who were much less honorable. It didn't matter the subject, what was important was they were together, at least for a short time (33).

That November, Ruth Ann, Sally, and their mother Ruth joined the Schwarzkopf men in Tehran. The following spring, it was decided that H. Norman and his sisters would attend the École Internationale, a boarding school in Geneva. There they would each experience the cultures, languages, and politics of European countries.

In the spring of 1948, General Schwarzkopf's mission in Iran ended and he was ordered to the Army European Headquarters in Frankfurt, assigned as Assistant Provost Marshall in occupied Germany. While in that capacity he was again credited with reorganizing an ineffective constabulary and establishing intelligence control in that zone, again patterned after his organization of the New Jersey State Police. During his assignment he was credited with wiping out a multi-million dollar black market smuggling ring.

For the fourteen year-old H. Norman, that meant moving to Frankfurt with his parents and starting over under drastically different conditions. Frankfurt in the summer of 1948 still bore the wrath of war torn Germany, and now in the hands of the occupying forces was controlled by thousands of American soldiers. The Army ran everything, even the Frankfurt American High School and Heidelberg American High School where he played soccer and football.

In 1950, General Schwarzkopf was transferred to Italy where he directed security aspects of the Marshall Plan as the Chief of the Military Assistance Group in Italy under the Atlantic Pact. For his sixteen year-old son, that meant returning to America and attending the Valley Forge Military Academy under the offer of a two-year football scholarship, an opportunity he accepted willingly (49).

In February 1951, during his junior year at Valley Forge, General Schwarzkopf visited his son and together they strategized on him attaining a congressional appointment to West Point for the following year. Making a list of congressmen from New Jersey, H. Norman sent each a letter of introduction and request to be considered for nomination. The responses were nothing but form letters like, "Dear Cadet Schwarzkopf: Thank you very much for your inquiry. It has been noted that neither you nor your parents are constituents of Congressman Jones, and his practice is to appoint only candidates from his district. Thank you very much for your interest in the national defense." Terribly frustrated, H. Norman couldn't believe that because his father, an Army officer was out of the country serving overseas, he couldn't get a nomination. His concern grew and he sent letters to congressmen in Pennsylvania, New York, and even South Carolina. But by May 1951, when his father retired from active duty and returned to New Jersey he still had no nomination to West Point.

General Schwarzkopf was a man of principle, and as much as he wanted to see his son at West Point he didn't intercede. He had faith in his son and faith in the admissions system. He'd get in fair and square. In the meantime, he urged his son to pursue an "Honors Military Appointment," a few slots held open each year for military school candidates to compete for. Winners were chosen on leadership potential, high school grades, athletics, school activities, and a nationwide exam similar to the college boards.

With his father's confidence in his abilities, H. Norman returned to Valley Forge for his senior year, determined to stand out in every way he could. And stand out he did. He earned varsity letters in both football and track, became one of the highest-ranking cadets at the academy, was at the top of his class academically, named editor of the yearbook, won the debating contest, and was named valedictorian of his class at Valley Forge. Yet, while everything had fallen into place, he still had no appointment to West Point. The Navy attempted to recruit him with a full ROTC scholarship to the college of his choice, and a promise he could join the Marines when he got out. But that didn't go over too big in the Schwarzkopf household. By mid-June, H. Norman resigned to the fact that it was too late to receive an appointment, and began considering his fallback plan to enroll at the Newark College of Engineering, and try again the following year to obtain a nomination.

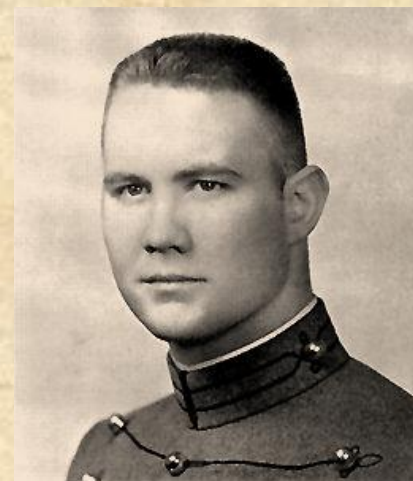
Then on June 26th a telegram arrived, simply stating:

ENTITLED ADMISSION WEST POINT AS COMPETITOR HONOR MILITARY SCHOOL STOP REPORT SUPERINTENDENT WEST POINT NEW YORK BEFORE ELEVEN OCLOCK AM DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ONE JULY FOR ADMISSION AS CADET (54)

The next four years were a learning experience Cadet H. Norman Schwarzkopf previously could only have imagined. While his father had prepared him throughout most of his life for this undertaking, living it was a whole different matter. And like military school, he excelled under the disciplined structure.

On June 5, 1956, H. Norman Schwarzkopf graduated from West Point and was awarded a Second Lieutenant's Commission in the United States Army. But his greatest feeling of accomplishment had to do with his father. "He and Mom were there, of course, and after the ceremony when he gave me a hug, his eyes were brimming with tears. I could see by his happiness that having his boy graduate from West Point had fulfilled his dream. More than any other day of my life, I felt like a good son" (71).

Looking back General Schwarzkopf explained, "Somehow, during the four years I spent in that idealized



military world a new system of values came alive in my mind. When I began as a plebe, “Duty, Honor, Country” was just a motto I’d heard from Pop. I loved my country, of course, and I knew how to tell right from wrong, but my conscience was still largely uninformed. By the time I left, those values had become fixed stars. It was a tremendous liberation...instilling the ideal of service above self – to do my duty for my country regardless of what personal gain it brought, and even if it brought no gain at all. It gave me far more than a military career – it gave me a calling” (72).

In 1954, Brigadier General Schwarzkopf was promoted to Major General, United States Army Reserve and appointed Commanding General of the 7th New Jersey Reserve Division. Major General Schwarzkopf remained in the United States Army Reserve until 1957, when he returned his last salute, and after forty years of continuous service, officially retired from the United States Army.

In 2006, his son, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, United States Army (Retired), renowned Commander of the Allied Forces in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm explained, “There is no question about the fact that I absolutely idolized my father and wanted to be exactly like him. I’m proudest of just who and what my father was, and what he represented. His uncompromising integrity, love of country, and love of family was displayed very prominently in most everything he did. All of it came together and emerged as one man, an extraordinary individual in many, many ways.”

The General felt that his mother and sisters had similar memories of a type of hero worship of his father. His father’s position allowed their family access to certain things the ordinary person wouldn’t have access to. But, his father allowed them each to go their own way. It may not always have been what he wanted, and in some cases it wasn’t what he wished for, but none the less he understood that they were individuals, and that they had their own lives to live.

General Schwarzkopf confessed that he had heard the term “Schwarzkopfian” years ago as it related to his father. He equated the term’s meaning to that of simple “discipline.” He explained, “That’s fundamentally the core of any good organization, particularly one that’s involved in law enforcement. Uncompromising integrity and certainly, uncompromising discipline, the old laws of leadership – that’s take charge and do what’s right! Those are the laws that can’t be violated, particularly in the position of public trust when you’re dealing with the United States public as a member of law enforcement.” Well said!

The General advised that his fondest memory of his father was near the end of his life, when he was dying, riddled with cancer. They would be out driving down the Garden State Parkway or wherever, and as they approached a State Police car his father would straighten up in the seat and wave to the Trooper. And as they passed by he would proudly say, “That’s my Outfit.” He could remember his father saying that so often, so proudly of the State Troopers, all

of whom always returned the friendly gesture. His father was so very proud of the State Police and the way they kick-started out as, and what they eventually became.

Herbert had been a chain smoker throughout his adult life, and in the summer of 1958 doctors told him he had contracted lung cancer. He endured an operation where doctors removed part of his infected lung, but the disease lingered on. His exposure to mustard gas during World War I had also left him prone to pneumonia which he battled from time to time. The two eventually combined and on November 25, 1958, Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf passed away.

Leaving specific instructions detailing what he wanted done, his son followed them to the letter. After being cremated, he was buried at West Point with full military honors, including an honor guard and thirteen gun artillery salute over the Hudson River, an honor accorded him because he had risen to the rank of Major General in the Army Reserve, an honor certainly befitting the man who became New Jersey's 1st State Police Superintendent.

For then Lieutenant H. Norman Schwarzkopf, his career was just beginning. After serving two tours in Viet Nam he remained in the Army, moving from post to post, instilling those important character traits passed onto him by his father, ultimately achieving the prestigious rank of General and Commander-in-Chief of United States Central Command.



Thirty-eight years after his father's passing, on a May 3rd rain-swept parade ground at the Sea Girt Training Academy, a retired Army General joined the ranks of the New Jersey State Police to commemorate their 75th Anniversary. There in honor of his father, H. Norman Schwarzkopf accepted the honorary title of Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police for the day, and was issued a solid gold replica of his father's badge, #1. Addressing the military style review of more than 300 State Troopers and well over 2,000 spectators, *Superintendent* Schwarzkopf proclaimed:

“Today you have honored me by making me the Honorary Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. I’m very, very proud that at least for a very short time, I can be in my father’s outfit. I am proud today to call myself a New Jersey State Trooper.”

