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The 27th
Sol Feinstone Lecture

on

**THE
MEANING OF FREEDOM**

By

H. Ross Perot

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The United States Military Academy is pleased to sponsor an annual lecture series on the Meaning of Freedom. It is significant that this lecture program has been made possible by the generosity of the late Mr. Sol Feinstone, a dedicated American patriot whose commitment to the ideals of the American Revolution led him to devote many years of effort, as well as considerable personal resources, to the collection of important letters, manuscripts, and books dealing with our heritage of freedom. His donation of these items to libraries and educational institutions ensures that the message which they proclaim will be preserved and transmitted to future generations of Americans.

Mr. Feinstone's abiding faith in a brotherhood of free nations of men has found further expression in several lecture series which he has endowed in order to permit prominent Americans to interpret the Meaning of Freedom.

The U.S. Corps of Cadets and the staff and faculty of the Military Academy are pleased to recognize the generosity and loyalty of this great American for providing a living endowment in the defense of freedom.

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

Ross Perot

It is a pleasure to be with you tonight. You represent the best of our country, and I am very proud to be in the same room with you. You understand something that a lot of people don't understand and that is that freedom is not free. Freedom doesn't come easy. You have to fight for it. You have to earn it. And it is fragile if you want to keep it. Let's go back. Think what it must have been like to come to this country on a sailing ship, and I don't know if you have ever seen any of these ships, but if you ever go to Bermuda there is a replica of the ship that wrecked off of Bermuda that was headed to Virginia. And you wouldn't let your cat go across the lake on it, much less consider going across the ocean on it. These people were on fire to be free. Now we have been free so long we take it for granted. And you are part of a small group in our country who understands that you can't take freedom for granted for a minute. These were tough people. A free country needs tough people. You are tough people. As I go across this country, I have trouble finding tough people. So it is a privilege to be with you. They came to Ellis Island. They had nothing. When they got through immigration, they walked into New York City. They didn't have a job. They didn't have any money. There was no welfare program. They were on their own, and they couldn't speak English, and guess what – they made it.

They scrambled. They got the money together. They saved their money. Wait a minute, no credit cards? No, they saved the money. They made pennies a day. They finally put together enough to head west. Flying on American Airlines? No, covered wagon. Well, how do you get a covered wagon? You buy it. Well, can you finance it? No, you pay for it. So you had to work your guts out to get a wagon and a couple of mules. You didn't know where you were going. But you had the dream, and you

headed west. I had a lot of people say, "Why in the world did the pioneers ever stop in Texas; it's so hot down here." I said their mules died in the summertime. They didn't have a choice. Now, see that was the bad news. Later on, they were on these little farms barely making a living and oil came in. It all turned out fine. But just think of the courage and the guts it took to go across this country on a covered wagon. There was no McDonald's, no drive-ins. You had to hunt for your food. There were groups of people. Several wagons in the group. There were no roads, no super highways, no signs. You hunted for food, and at the end of the day if you didn't get any, the other people in the wagon that happened to get a squirrel or a rabbit or something shared it with you and they made it.

These were tough people who understood freedom – and when they built a little town, you know what? There'd be all these little houses that were nothing. Go to all these little towns in our country, and the most impressive building is the church they built, because one of the things they came to America for is to be able to practice the religion of their choice. Now after 200 years most of us are too lazy to get up and go to Sunday school and church. We take it for granted. But when you can't go, history teaches us – go to the catacombs in Rome, go across the world – when you can't practice the religion of your choice, and when you're not free, you will pay a tremendous price to keep that.

They didn't have the weapons in the Revolution to win. When they fought for independence, if they had understood the problem, they wouldn't have tried. But they were on fire to become a free, independent country. They fought barefoot in the snow. I wonder how many people we have in this country are tough enough now. Just think if some terrorists took out the power on the East Coast on a cold winter night. Would our first reaction be to fight or to surrender? I hope it would be to fight. But I think everyone would be in shock and say, "I'm cold." Okay. The signers of the

Declaration of Independence paid a tremendous price. A man named Hart had a wife and thirteen children and a house. And he had to leave the house because the British were trying to find him to capture him. He had to live in the woods. They burned his house, and he lost his family and died of a broken heart. And he is one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and gave us our first piece of freedom. The people who founded this country lived Patrick Henry's words: "Give me liberty or give me death." We have got to be as strong and as committed as they were.

I want you to understand how lucky you are to be at this great institution. I understand it because I was lucky enough to be able to go to the Naval Academy. And not everybody gets to go. And there are not many institutions like these institutions that teach you to be what you are and what you can be. So every morning, I don't care how rigorous a program it is, just get up and look in the mirror and say, "I am the luckiest person in the world to be at this great place." And keep charging the hill. You are being trained to be the future guardians of our freedom.

Let me show you how lucky you are. When I was General Motors' largest stockholder and on the Board of Directors, we had a factory worker named Don Ephlin who was so smart he was accepted at MIT, but he couldn't afford to attend. He was so smart that he was accepted at West Point, but didn't pass the eye exam. And he spent his career on the factory floor. The difference between most of you and Don Ephlin is that you passed the eye exam. He had everything else it took. Do you see what I mean, how lucky you are? You don't control 20/20, right? How lucky you are to be here. The good news is he spent his life on the factory floor. In his later years, he made a brilliant speech to the Board of Directors. I asked him, I said, "Don, I have to speak to the Fortune 500 business executives. Would you allow me to read your speech? I will get a standing ovation and then I am going to tell them whose speech it is." He laughed and said, "Go ahead." I got the standing

ovation. I told them whose speech it was, and they went into shock. He didn't get the breaks. We got the breaks. But here is the good news: America is a fair place. After he retired from General Motors, he was invited to lecture at MIT – the school he couldn't afford to attend.

You need to compare yourself to your peers in the civilian colleges. They are learning only academic subjects. You are learning how to fight for our freedom. You are learning to take responsibilities for other people's lives. They don't even think about that. You are learning and being taught leadership and being given the opportunity to practice leadership. And believe it or not, in our most elite business schools, they don't even teach leadership. Boy, does that give you an advantage in terms of being able to get the multiplier effect in being able to get a lot done because one person can only do so much.

Most importantly – if you say, “What is the most important thing I will learn here at West Point?” You are being taught to maintain the highest possible standards of honor, duty and integrity. And there is nothing more important than that. And that gets tattooed and drilled into your head all day, every day, and I hope you understand why that is so important. You live the words Duty, Honor, Country. Across this great country and in most universities that is not discussed. These experiences prepare you to protect and defend our freedom, and how can anything else be a more important use of your time and your talents? When you think of the great people from this institution, whether it's MacArthur or Eisenhower or Patton (and the list goes on forever), you realize that they were instrumental in giving us the freedom that we have today and you can be instrumental in doing it in the first thirty or thirty-five years of the twenty-first century. What a mission. What an opportunity.

You have great role models. I want to mention a few that I hope you will use as role models. I think of Colonel Earl Rudder who, with a handful of Rangers, started the Normandy invasion. He and the Rangers had to take out Pont de Hoc, a cliff at Normandy beach. Artillery on top of the cliff. A handful of team members went ashore. They borrowed, and this is their word, borrowed, wooden fire ladders from the British Fire Department. I don't think they ever took them back. Now, just imagine the Germans throwing everything they had at a small team of people. They laid those ladders against a cliff. Climbed the cliff. Took out the artillery. Fired a flare. And the Normandy invasion began, and it could not have begun if they had not accomplished the mission. What a noble cause – and they did it. If you ever go to Normandy Beach, make it a point to go to Pont de Hoc.

When I'm with you tonight, I think of people like Major Nick Rowe. West Point graduate, outstanding man. I think about him every day, and you say why? His wife and his pictures of his two little boys are right behind my desk. So when I see them, I think of him every day. He was captured in Vietnam in combat. He was kept by the Vietcong as a prisoner for five years. He was the only POW that ever escaped. Now keep in mind that if you're American trying to escape over in Asia, once you get out, you kind of stand out in a crowd. Now a lot of guys tried to escape repeatedly, and I'll talk about some of them, but Nick Rowe pulled it off. He was being taken through an area by the Vietcong, and suddenly helicopters started swarming in. The person responsible for Nick was walking in front of him. Nick realized he only had one magazine in his weapon and none on his body. And, as he was struggling around and watching the helicopter, Nick quietly pinched the button and the magazine fell on the ground. The guy didn't notice it for several hundred yards. The weeds were up to your waist. So then immediately the guy asked Nick to help him find it, and Nick pretended to help him. But the helicopters were swarming all around. Nick then knocked the guy out. He was

unconscious. Nick ran out in the open and waved at the helicopters. There was every reason in the world for the helicopters to think that Nick was Vietnamese and that they should just strike him. The pilot of the helicopters swarmed in and was gonna take it. And said, "Wait a minute, let's capture this guy." But this guy was waving to them and he said, "Wait a minute, there's something odd here." And then they realized this might be an American. They landed. Nick jumped in the back of the helicopter. The rest is history. Then he came home. He served his country in a very noble way. And then he went back over to the Philippines on a classified assignment. And, I hate to tell you this, was later assassinated. But what a man, what a role model, and what an example to all of us.

Lieutenant Colonel Bill Leftwich came from a wealthy family in Memphis. Anybody here from Memphis? Must be somebody here from Memphis. Anyhow, that's a well-known name in Memphis. There are all kinds of memorials to Bill there, tennis centers and so on and so forth. He didn't have to work. But he had to work, and he had to be a Marine. He was in Vietnam. In his first tour, he received every medal but the Medal of Honor. Anybody in the Marines had the bar set pretty high, but he was certainly in the range of a person who could have earned the Medal of Honor. But he was a highly decorated Marine, receiving every award but the Medal of Honor. So highly respected that when he came home he was made aide to the Secretary of the Navy. That's a nice compliment. At the end of his tour with John Warner, John says, "Bill where do you want to go? You can go anywhere you want to go." Bill said back to Vietnam. I was with him the night he left. We were at the Waldorf Astoria, at a big dinner honoring Bob Hope. Bob Hope heard that Bill Leftwich was there and asked to see him privately in his room. Tells you who Bill was. After that evening, Bill put on his uniform and went back to Vietnam. About six months later, the Secretary of the Navy, John Warner, called me at three in the morning, crying openly, saying, "Ross, we've

lost Bill.” Bill was in charge of a recon battalion. Bill’s policy, not Marine Corps policy, was that any time his men got in trouble he went out and rescued them. He’d just pulled a team out of trouble. They came out of the jungle, up in the air, 1200 feet in the air. The edge of the helicopter blade hit a cliff. And the helicopter was sputtering to the earth and Bill Leftwich with no emotion at all in his voice was using the radio back to the command center, dictating a farewell message to his wife and his sons. Tells you a lot about Bill Leftwich, right? I’ll tell you all you need to know about Bill Leftwich. There’s a Leftwich Memorial Trophy given every year by the Marine Corps to an outstanding young Marine officer in the Marine Corps and that is one of the most highly sought after awards in the Marine Corps.

Let me give you another very different case. Dick Meadows dropped out of high school, West Virginia. Poor boy from West Virginia, fought bravely in Korea. Was back in Vietnam fighting and was so outstanding that General Westmoreland personally commissioned him as a second Lieutenant on the battlefields of Vietnam. Not bad for a high school dropout, right? Why am I telling this? You hear all these stories of heroes a hundred years ago. I want to tell you about the heroes of today. Dick Meadows is one of the founders of the Delta team. Dick Meadows is James Bond in real life. Dick Meadows was in Tehran for thirty days when we were trying to rescue the fifty-two hostages, by himself with a German passport. How’s that for guts? The night the raid failed and the helicopter crashed in the desert, Dick was there all by himself. There was no plan to evacuate him. I got a call from the Pentagon. They knew I was close to Dick, and they wanted to make sure I knew they had left Dick’s picture in the helicopter in the desert. So Dick was a wanted man. In today’s technology, I could just call him direct in his hotel room. That’s pretty simple. Now compare that to Revolutionary War, when Ben Franklin used to have to carry messages on a sailing ship to Paris. I called Dick. Of course, Dick got out on his own. No problem.

Now this was after he retired. He was in Panama for thirty days, before Panama went down, by himself, getting everything set up. He was one of a kind, and I could tell you stories about him forever. He was one of the founders of the Delta Team. He was the number two man on the Son Tay Raid. That tells you a lot about him because Colonel Simons would be very careful in terms of who he picked as his number two man on the Son Tay Raid. That raid was executed brilliantly, and, unfortunately, the camp was empty. But in terms of the strategy and the tactics of getting it done, it was textbook. And I could tell you all you need to know about Dick Meadows. And I know a lot of you have this saying. Dick Meadows was offered the Medal of Honor and turned it down because he didn't think he deserved it. How many people ever did that? I respect that. And I know you do, too.

These are the types of people that you are. These are the types of people that you are going to be. These are the types of people that you are going to be associated with. And there are not a lot of people like that around. But, it is people like this that allow us to keep the Star Spangled Banner waving. It is people like you that will allow it in the twenty-first century.

Jerry O'Mally, West Point graduate, went into the Air Force. One of the first teachers at the Air Force Academy when it was started. He did "mission impossible." He flew U2s, SR71s all over China, all over Russia for years. Well, he ought to be shot down every flight. This guy just had to feel that nothing could get him. And, again and again and again, he went over to do the reconnaissance and the intelligence gathering for our country. And his career is legendary. All the great things he did in the Air Force made him one of the most respected officers in the Air Force. He was a four-star general. He was on his way to being Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. And went out with his wife one night to raise money with the Boy Scouts in Scranton, Pennsylvania. If you have ever been

to the Scranton, Pennsylvania, airport, there is a cliff at the end of it. The airplane he was in lost one engine on takeoff, and we lost General O'Mally and his wife. But there is a man that stood as a guardian of the gate during the Cold War and took risks like few people have ever taken. And he is from this great institution. And if you spent five minutes with him, you would want to spend the rest of your life being associated with him. And you would certainly, if you ever had to go in combat, want to be at his side.

General Robbie Risner, Oklahoma cowboy, flew P-38s in World War II. Goes back a long way, right? The man selected by the Air Force to retrace Lindbergh's route in a jet across the Atlantic. So he was handpicked, outstanding fighter pilot to go blasting across the Atlantic, Lindbergh's route. A top ace in Vietnam. Fought the last personal air-to-air duel that will ever be fought. I want him to come up and talk to all of you. And whenever you're ready, I will make sure Robbie gets here. And I will guarantee you he will be the most spellbinding speaker you have ever had. He is seventy-five years old but he is about thirty in terms of his spirit. And he will wear you out. You will love him. He met China's top ace in the air over Korea. MacArthur set it up. The last personal air-to-air duel that will ever be fought, probably. Robbie decided in the middle of the fight to fight him defensively because Robbie had more fuel. Then, as China's ace had to go back north of the Yalu River, Robbie decided that, instead of just zapping him there, he would go all the way up to his base and zap him down in front of his own troops and that would be the ultimate loss of face for China's top ace. Now I have just defined the warrior spirit, I think, right there. And that is exactly what he did. And then, as he zapped the guy, he looked down at the runway and there were nineteen Migs on the ground. He got seventeen as he went down the runway. Not a bad trip. You have heard this story and you don't know it. You remember when President Truman chewed out MacArthur for bombing the airfield north of the Yalu River? Those are the details. There is not one black mark in Robbie's

service record. MacArthur loved it. MacArthur took all the heat as another West Pointer. MacArthur took all the heat and that is the end of that story.

Robbie is now in Vietnam. *Time* magazine runs his picture on the cover. America's top ace in Vietnam. Ninety days later hit by a SAM missile. Vietnamese knew exactly whom they had because of the *Time* magazine story. They put this great man in a black box and kept him there for five years. It was 140 degrees in the box. He never bent. He never broke. And, instead, he inspired countless young officers to stay alive by tapping on the box with a tap code. How is that for leadership. How would you like to make an inspirational speech, tap tap tap, like that? Robbie could do it. And, when he talks to you, you will understand why. After five years, just imagine 140 degrees in the box, they took him out of the box. It took him just a few weeks to regain his ability to walk and talk and so on and so forth. He was the senior officer in the camps. He looked around, now I'm coming back to freedom of religion, and realized that they weren't allowed to have church services. As the senior officer of the camp, he ordered church services the following Sunday. The guy says we don't have any hymnbooks or anything. Robbie said just write them out on paper. The only paper they had was toilet paper, and so they wrote the hymns on toilet paper. They were singing, "Onward Christian Soldiers," in this chapel service, and the Vietnamese stormed in. When you can't go to church, you will take every risk, including risking your life to practice your beliefs. Those religious beliefs kept him alive. Talk to any of the guys that made it through. The Vietnamese came in, grabbed Robbie, and dragged him back to the box. The prisoners that were there with him stood proudly as they dragged Robbie away and sang a strictly forbidden song, the "Star Spangled Banner," and were brutally tortured for singing that song. Years later, when Robbie came home, I said, "Robbie, what was going on in your mind when they dragged you back to the box?" And he looked – you know, I thought he would tell me some sad poignant

story. He looked at me and his eyes were twinkling. He says, "Perot," he says, "With those guys singing the 'Star Spangled Banner,' I was nine feet tall. I could have killed a guerrilla with a switch." Now, how'd you like to be in combat against a guy like that? Indomitable spirit.

Now then, Robbie came home. He ran Nellis Air Force Base. He was responsible for the Thunderbirds. But guess what? And then one of his first priorities was to bring Nguyen Dat, a South Vietnamese fighter pilot who was imprisoned with our men, whom the Vietnamese had used as a servant to embarrass him and made him do all the dirty work around the prisons. But Nguyen Dat, whose nickname was Max, used that opportunity to smuggle food and medicine to our men and kept countless men alive, and the highest thing on Robbie's agenda when he came home was to bring Max over here and honor him. Max was honored across the U.S. Max went back home. Saigon fell in 1975. Robbie and a handful of other prisoners were going in to save him. They didn't forget the guy. Now can you imagine after seven years in hell going back in to pick up a Vietnamese guy? That takes a real leader, right? That takes a person with a lot of integrity. They were on the border, ready to go, and do you know who saved them? Another great military officer, General Brent Scowcroft, the day Saigon fell got word of this and within thirty minutes had a minivan and a car. Nineteen members of Dat's family were taken to Tan Son Nhat airport. Dat was put in the trunk of the car and taken to Tan Son Nhat airport and Dat's here in the good old U.S.A. They didn't forget him right? Tells you all you need to know about these people.

General Stiner ran the Special Forces. These guys are tough people, but they also have hearts bigger than Texas. General Stiner was going into surgery that could cost him his life. The doctor said Stiner totally discounted this and ignored him because, "Special Forces guys don't die." And he had only one concern on

his mind and that was a sergeant that just lost his leg to a land mine in Turkey right after the Persian Gulf War. He wasn't thinking about himself. He was worried about the sergeant. This is a four-star general. Now that is my kind of leader. He wanted to make sure that sergeant had full mobility. He couldn't leap over tall buildings anymore. He didn't feel like a man anymore. He wanted to put him back on his feet. To make a long story short, I have seen the guy sprint. He plays rugby. He has broken his leg four times playing rugby. And General Stiner recovered from his operation. But, going into surgery, he wasn't worried about Stiner – he was worried about Todd Reed. My kind of leader.

Wayne Downing, West Point graduate. Ran the Special Forces. A role model of what all of us should be. He is out. He's retired. He has done heroic things. Suddenly China is taking over Hong Kong and a large number of non-Vietnamese that fought alongside our Special Forces and did incredible things to protect them and save their lives during the war. When Saigon fell, they had to flee to an island off Hong Kong named Star Island. As Hong Kong was being taken over by China, China made a deal with Vietnam to give these guys back to Vietnam. And the odds were, at least about one-hundred percent, that they were going to execute them. The word went out. And I got a call from the Special Forces guy. I didn't know the details. I called General Shelton who was running Special Forces. And he said, "Ross, the only reason I am alive today is because of the Nungs. We have got to get them out." He said, "What is the problem?" I said that they have to be validated. He said, "Whatever it takes, we have got to get them out." Well, that got my attention because if you have been around General Shelton when he talks, he will get your attention. And, if he has not been here, I hope he can come here because he is a warrior. And a man that you should know. So then I called General Wayne Downing to get his advice. He wasn't there, but his wife gave me a ten-minute lecture on how many times they have saved Wayne. Told me that Wayne was in a hotel in

Washington. I called him. I briefed him. Wayne said, "I will be on the next plane because the challenge was to validate who these people were so that the State Department and immigration would let them come to the U.S." He said, "I can do that on the next plane." I said, "Where do you want me to send the ticket?" He said, "Perot, nobody buys this ticket but me. I wouldn't be alive if it weren't for those guys." He is not a rich man, but this was in his heart, this was in his soul. This was what a leader is all about. I said, "Can I help you with anything?" He said, "I need an interpreter." Well, if you remember what I have been saying earlier, it is obvious to you that I asked Max Dat to go, right? South Vietnamese fighter pilot. He would be a dead man if they caught him because he would be a better trophy to trade than the Nungs. He was on the next plane. They got there on a Monday. They called me on a Tuesday. He said, "Perot, the Chinese won't let us on the island, but, don't worry, we will get on the island. We will validate them, and we will call you when it's done." I didn't hear anything from them until Saturday. They called me on Saturday; they said it is all taken care of. The men are all on their way to the U.S. I said, "Just out of curiosity, guys, how did you do this? How did you get on the island?" And I will never forget the conversation. Wayne Downing said, "Don't ask, Perot," laughed, and hung up. And I still don't know, and I don't need to know, right? I would like to know. I don't know if they swam out. I don't know if they parasailed in. I don't know what they did. But they got those men out. Now, it would be awful easy to forget men who fought alongside you twenty-five years ago. But they didn't because they had the qualities and the virtues that all of you have. And they are being taught to you in this great institution. And they are not taught in civilian colleges. And that gives you an advantage that the others will never have.

I have to tell you a very different story that shows the warmth, the love, and affection that comes with leadership. We had a sergeant named David Campbell who was dying at the end of the Persian

Gulf War. We had a commander, a Navy commander, who was his doctor, who was the perfect doctor, who said, "I can't save him but the right team of specialists could." The leading trauma doctor in the United States was consulted by the command center in the Pentagon, and [he] said, "The good news is there are three geniuses called up in the reserves. They're in the Persian Gulf. I don't know what branch of service they're in. Here are their names. Find them. They'll save him." Admiral Robertson at the Pentagon, who was on duty in charge of the National Command Center, called General Neal. These are admirals, generals, you follow me? This is a sergeant. This is the way it ought to be. Within three hours, they sent General Neal out on a Sunday night. A general out to find three genius doctors and didn't know what branch of the service they were in. How'd you like – that's like going out at night without a flashlight, right? He found them, and within three hours they stabilized David Campbell, and David Campbell is back at work in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, because generals and admirals cared about a sergeant. That's what you're being taught. I just wanted to give you examples of the fact that it's really practiced out there in the field.

General Alexander Haig, another graduate of West Point. I had the privilege of working with him on the POWs. I think it's very important that you understand that here's a man with tremendous responsibilities in the National Security Council, but you would have thought those POWs were his sons. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, the whole time I was involved that was Al Haig's top priority. His heart was in it. His soul was in it. He was committed. You don't find a lot of that sometimes in politics.

One of my best examples is Colonel Arthur Simons. This Friday at Fort Bragg a twelve-foot high statue will be unveiled honoring his memory. Colonel Simons started in World War II. His first raid was in New Guinea. Took six guys off a submarine; these were Rangers. Lived in the jungles of New Guinea for six weeks,

observing a radio station on top of a mountain with a cliff behind it. Classic Simons: get in position, get organized, and wait for the opportunity. Six weeks in the jungle eating bananas, eating whatever they could find, staying undercover. Then he waited until a monsoon-like rain because he had figured the whole thing out. There were sixteen guys up there. There was one guy on duty, and the guy on duty always looked down the face of the mountain. So the night of the monsoon-like rain, he left his team behind. Again, classic Simons – he always took the risk. And climbed the cliff without a weapon, and only a knife in the small of his back. When he got to the top of the cliff, it was black, raining, nobody could see anything. He took the guy on duty out. Took his weapon. Went into the barracks. Shot the other fifteen guys in their sleep. Later on, I heard a lady ask him, "Why didn't you wake them up?" He says, "In war you don't wake your enemy up and say let's fight. See, your dream is to find them asleep." The point being that then he blew up the tower. Walked down the face of the mountain. Got the team. Blew up the rubber raft and went back to the submarine. That is where it all started. It was just one after another like that.

He was instrumental in rescuing the Bataan death marchers. Everything he did was unconventional. He had to surprise the Japanese because they were gonna kill the battalion death marchers. Simons and a team of Rangers rode through the jungle on paths, riding motor scooters but staying far enough away that nobody could hear the motor scooters. Then they sneaked in and waited again for the opportunity, caught them by surprise, rescued the death marchers. And I can go on and on and on.

He was the Godfather of the Son Tay Raid. It was done to perfection, twenty miles outside of Hanoi. The most heavily defended city in the history of warfare. No accidents. Only one guy got a broken ankle when the fire extinguisher came off of the helicopter bulkhead. Everything went perfect. Simons took the

major risk because they knew that all the guards were in a given barracks and it had a single door. And Simons said, "Okay, I know this." They are going to turn on the lights, scramble around for their boots and weapons, and come staggering out one at a time, night-blind. So he took a huge sergeant and put him by the door. Simons was standing right outside the door. And, as these guys came out one at a time, Simons shot them. The big guy threw them on the side so that the next guy coming out wouldn't see anybody. The bad news is, the camp was empty. But that was classic Simons.

Then, after he was retired and I had the two men taken in Iran, we tried every way in the world to work out a way to get them released because they hadn't done anything and the Iranians were just holding them. So we had run the computers during the Revolution. But they had them in a terrible prison situation. After everything failed, and our government could do nothing, I called Colonel Simons, explained it to him. And, when I finished, he said, "Yeah, I'll do it." Came in town the next morning. Had a large number of Vietnam veterans. He went through them. Picked the best. One hundred percent of them volunteered to go. Now that says a lot about people who have been in the military service. These guys have been shot at and wounded. He picked the best of the best. Trained his team and took them into Tehran. Smuggled all of the weapons into Tehran. And waited for the opportunity. Then he roamed the streets of Tehran. And everybody said, "How could Simons roam the streets of Tehran during the Revolution?" And I show them his picture. I said, "If you saw that guy on the street, your attitude will be if he will leave me alone, I'll leave him alone." He is overwhelming. I mean, this is not a guy you will want to come up and have small talk with. Anyhow, he came up with a plan because there are all these revolutionary mobs. They had leaders. The leaders had meetings every morning. Now, see how I am conventionally lost? He was clear outside the box here. But everything they planned to do in a meeting they never did.

Typically they planned some noble event and then went to go burn a friend's car if they were lucky or something. Never got to pull anything off. He took one Iranian that worked for us that he trusted. That Iranian formed a mob. That Iranian got to look normal out there in the mobs and in the early morning meetings. And one morning our Iranian walked in and he paid \$200 to bribe the police to leave the magazine open. And he had all kinds of weapons and he stood up on the desk. And he was throwing weapons out. Colonel Simons wasn't even in the room and he said, "Guys, raid the prisons. Our best deal is up to us to free the thousands of political prisoners held against their will." And, within ten minutes, one day and the only day the mobs ever got organized, over fifty thousand hit the wall. The guards at the prison didn't even fire back; they were stripping down to their long underwear. I kept saying to Colonel Simons, "Shouldn't we have someone to pick our guys up?" He said, "No, tell them to come to the rendezvous party." I said, "On their own?" He said, "Perot, these guys will never be smarter than they will be coming out of that prison." To make a long story short, they got to the rendezvous party.

Classic Simons – he didn't do anything for two weeks. The Iranians went crazy looking for them at the airport. He just kept them in the house. Then he started out over land. Every ten miles he had these tough guys who fought in Vietnam climb the telephone poles and cut the wires. If I would have told them to do that, they would have told me what to do. But when Simons told you to climb the poles, you climbed the poles. Fifty times over five hundred and forty miles. They got to within thirty miles of the Turkish border. Suddenly, they pulled him out of the car, and they started beating Colonel Simons with a rifle butt. Our guys were waiting for a signal. Simons reached into his ski jacket and handed him a note that nobody knew he had. The note said, "These people are friends of the Revolution." It was written in Farsi. "Show them every courtesy and if necessary escort them safely to the

border." Signed Commandant, Tehran, Islamic Revolutionary Committee. Big seal. The guy stopped beating him. Went to the phone to call Tehran. Phones were out. Put him back in the car and took him to the border. This note was written by a nineteen year-old Iranian cab driver that had nothing to do with anything. If you are ever in my office, I have the original note. I will show it to you. And the seal says Ressi Religious School, founded 1344. And, when Simons showed me the note, I said, "Colonel, weren't you worried about that seal?" He said, "No, nobody reads seals. Do you read seals?" I do now. But do you see how unconventional he was? And what a special man he was. He was one of the founders of the Delta Team. He was a legendary member of the Special Forces. And he is a role model for what all of you should be.

Don't forget Sergeant Gordon Shugart who went back in again and again to get Chief Warrant Officer Durant in Somalia. You saw him dragged through the streets. They did ultimate valor. They earned the Medal of Honor and, God bless them, they got it.

And now I would like to talk about John Alexander Hottell, who is a West Pointer. He graduated in 1964. He wrote his own obituary. It was printed in the New York Times on March 3, 1971. If you don't have it, I will be glad to have a copy made for every person here at West Point. All you have to do is let the Superintendent know and I will get it to you. But this is one of the most inspirational things I ever read. It has been hanging on the wall outside my office since 1971. He graduated tenth in his class. He was a Rhodes Scholar in 1965. He earned two Silver Stars. He was killed in a crash of a helicopter on July 7, 1970. He said, "I am writing my own obituary because I am the best authority on my own life." Can't argue with that, right? He said, "I loved the Army. It reared me. It nurtured me. It gave me the most satisfying years of my life. The Army let me live in Japan, Germany and England with experiences in all of these places that

others only dreamed about. I have skied in the Alps. I killed a scorpion in my tent in Turkey.” That’s not one I would want to remember, I think. “I climbed Mount Fuji. Visited the ruins of Athens and Rome. Went to the towns of Gordium, where another Alexander challenged his destiny, and earned a Master’s Degree in a foreign university. I have known what it is like to be married to a fine and wonderful woman and to love her beyond bearing with sure knowledge that she loves me.”

Now, after about twenty years, it crossed my mind – I had never met his wife. I knew nothing about his wife. I started looking for his wife. She is a nurse in Norfolk, Virginia. She has never had another date. When I talked to her, she said, “Look, there can never be anyone else like Alex. He will be the only man in my life. I love him as much today as when he was here.” And she said, “I want you to know I am very happy. I could never be happier. I could never have a better life.” You would think she just found a million dollars on the street. But what a tribute to Alex and to her. “I commanded the company and was father, priest, income tax advisor, confessor and judge for two-hundred men at one time. I played college football and rugby. I won the British National Diving championship two years in a row. Boxed for Oxford against Cambridge but got knocked out in the first round. And played handball to distraction. All skills I learned at West Point. I have been an exchange student at the German military academy. Gone to German jumpmaster school. Made thirty parachute jumps in everything from a balloon in England to a jet at Fort Bragg. I experienced all of these things because I was in the Army. Now how in the world would anybody else be able to experience all of these things at that young age? I never knew what it was to fail. I never knew what it was to be too old or too tired to do anything.” And here is the most powerful statement of all: “I did not die for my country. I lived for my country. And surely, if there is nothing worth dying for, there is nothing worth living for.” Now, can you imagine a better role model as a leader

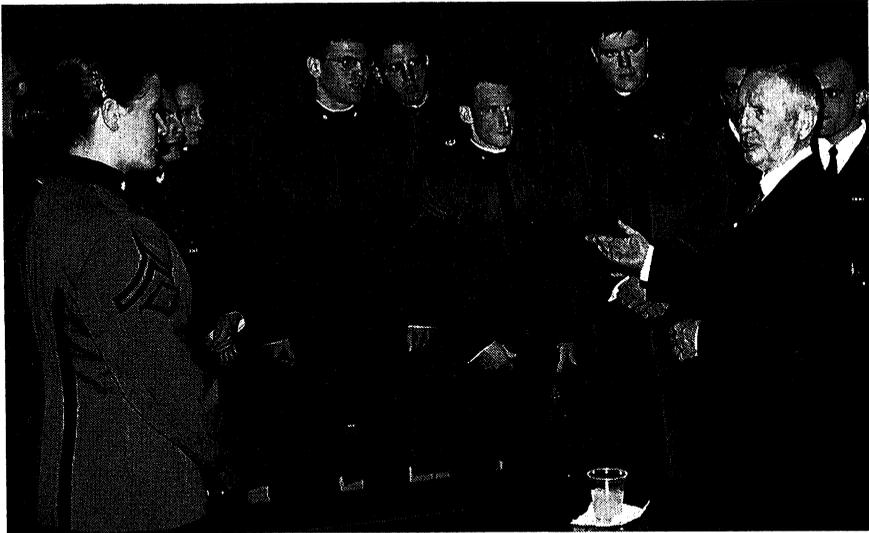
than Alex Hottell? And he learned it at this great institution. But, more importantly, he lived it in his life. Right? Now if you could be at the most elite school in the world, where none of this ever gets discussed, you won't be nearly the man or woman you will be living in this environment. Freedom is precious. Freedom is fragile. And freedom must be protected. I never look at this obituary without thinking of the phrase Duty, Honor and Country. I hope that every cadet here will maintain the highest standards of honor and integrity. I hope that you will always live the words when principle is involved be death to expediency. You will be the leaders protecting our freedom for the next thirty-five years. I know you will set a new standard of excellence. Now, in closing, I want you to remember always, every day think about the last phrase of the first verse of the Star Spangled Banner. It is a question: "Oh say, does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave, o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?" That is a question. And if the answer to that question is to be yes, we must have great leaders like you defending the gates of freedom. And we are so fortunate to have you with that mission and that commission. I know that your mission will make certain that this is done. And I know the answer if I ask you that question, the answer would be a resounding yes. And I thank you so much for your service to our country. It is a privilege to be with you. Thank you.



ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Mr. Perot grew up in Texarkana, Texas and graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1953. While at the Naval Academy, he served as Class President, Chairman of the Honor Committee and Battalion Commander. After graduation, he served at sea for four years on a destroyer and an aircraft carrier. After serving in the Navy, he worked for IBM and then started a one man data processing company named Electronic Data Systems or EDS. Today EDS is a multi-billion-dollar corporation employing more than 70 thousand people. In 1969, the US government asked Mr. Perot to determine what action might be taken to improve the brutal treatment our POWs were receiving in Southeast Asia. He worked on this project for the next four years, placing himself and his family at considerable personal risk until the prisoners were released in 1972 at the end of the Vietnam conflict. In recognition of his efforts, Mr. Perot received the medal for Distinguished Public Service: the highest civilian award presented by the Department of Defense. When two EDS employees were taken

hostage by the Iranian government in 1979, Mr. Perot directed a successful rescue mission composed of EDS employees and led by Colonel Arthur Bull Simons. Mr. Perot personally went into Iran and inside the prison where his associates were held. Noted Author, Ken Follett, wrote a best selling novel On Wings of Eagles about the rescue. An NBC TV mini series was later made about this event. In 1988, he founded a new computer services company, Perot Systems. Perot Systems has revenues of approximately one billion dollars and offices in the United States, Europe and Asia. In 1992, he ran for President. He ran for President along side with Admiral Stockdale. And in that election, he captured 19 % of the popular vote. He is the recipient of many awards and has authored seven books.



PAST FEINSTONE LECTURES

- 1971 - General Harold K. Johnson
- 1975 - Rear Admiral Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr.
- 1976 - Herman Wouk
- 1977 - Sidney Hook
- 1978 - Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.
- 1979 - Barbara W. Tuchman
- 1980 - Alistair Cook
 Isaac Bashevis Singer
- 1981 - Carl Sagan
- 1982 - George F. Will
- 1983 - Hanna H. Gray
- 1984 - Milton Friedman
- 1985 - Daniel Patrick Moynihan
- 1986 - Tom Wolfe
- 1987 - Elie Wiesel
- 1988 - A. Bartlett Giamatti
- 1989 - Dr. Richard Selzer
- 1990 - Dr. John Stoessinger
- 1991 - Fred Friendly
- 1992 - Dr. Orlando Patterson
- 1993 - Terry Anderson
- 1994 - Ambassador Madeleine K. Albright
- 1995 - Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin
- 1996 - Dr. Stephen Jay Gould
- 1997 - Pete Seeger
- 1998 - Chief Judge Richard P. Matsch



Dr. Sol Feinstone, (1888 – 1980), Founder and First Director of the David Library of the American Revolution, Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania.

SOL FEINSTONE'S CREDO

DEDICATED TO

The Judeo-Christian commitment of self-sacrifice for peace on earth, and the brotherhood of free nations of free men;

The Spirit of '76, a struggle of free men to remain free;

The immigrants who came after the revolution and helped build our country in freedom;

The underprivileged of all races who, by uplifting themselves, will raise all mankind to a higher humanity.

MY DEFINITION OF FREEDOM

In the beginning there was a void of sameness; the spark of life made everything different.

The stamp of sameness is the stamp of death.

Freedom to me means a social order based on individual freedom to live differently and dream differently. I dream of a Brotherhood of Free Nations of Free Men.

SOL FEINSTONE

