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Dear Commanders,

The following letter was given to Soldiers transitioning back to civilian life at the end of World War II. At the Wainwright Foundation we feel the sentiment is timeless and in some ways even more applicable today. We hope you find its content valuable enough to consider incorporating its into your transition counseling as your Soldiers and officers leave the military and continue serving their nation in varying roles of civilian leadership. Original copies of this letter can be found at [www.wainwrightfoundation.org](http://www.wainwrightfoundation.org) in the *Transitioning Soldiers Project* section or at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

Very respectfully,  
The Wainwright Foundation

**HEADQUARTERS FOURTH ARMY**

**FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS**

**To: All Personnel Being Discharged From The Army of The United States.**

You are being discharged from the Army today - from your Army. It is your Army because your skill, patriotism, labor, courage and devotion have been some of the factors which make it great. You have been a member of the finest military team in history. You have accomplished miracles in battle and supply. Your country is proud of you and you have every right to be proud of yourselves.

You have seen, in the lands where you worked and fought and where many of your comrades died, what happens when the people of a nation lose interest in their government. You have seen what happens when they follow false leaders. You have seen what happens when a nation accepts hate and intolerance.

We are all determined that what happened in Europe and in Asia must not happen to our country. Back in civilian life you will find that your generation will be called upon to guide our country's destiny. Opportunity for leadership is yours. The responsibility is yours. The nation which depended on your courage and stamina to protect it from its enemies now expects you as individuals to claim your right to leadership, a right which you earned honorably and which is well deserved.

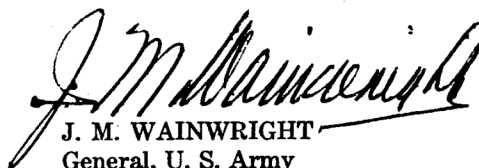
Start being a leader as soon as you put on your civilian clothes. If you see intolerance and hate, speak out against them. Make your individual voices heard, not for selfish things, but for honor and decency among men, for the rights of all people.

Remember, too, that No American can afford to be disinterested in any part of his government, whether it is county, city, state or nation.

Choose your leaders wisely - that is the way to keep ours the country for which you fought. Make sure that those leaders are determined to maintain peace throughout the world. You know what war is. You know that we must not have another. As individuals you can prevent it if you give to the task which lies ahead the same spirit which you displayed in uniform.

Accept that trust and the challenge which it carries. I know that the people of America are counting on you. I know that you will not let them down.

Goodbye to each and every one of you and to each and every one of you, good luck!

  
J. M. WAINWRIGHT  
General, U. S. Army  
Commanding