



# RESCORLA

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you on the eve of Memorial Day—a day of remembrance for those who have died in service to America. Having never spoken publicly about Vietnam I am not sure what would be of interest to you. Telling “war stories” is not my thing nor is it pleasant for you to listen over breakfast how 50 years ago, in late 1965, over 3,000 young American and Vietnamese soldiers—most of whom were teenagers—spent five days killing each other in a place called the Ia Drang Valley.

exhibit extraordinary qualities. Since Memorial Day is a time for “remembrance”, with your permission, I would like to spend a few minutes planting a memory of such an extraordinary man in your minds. My hope is that on this Memorial Day and for many to follow, you will remember a fellow named Rick Rescorla—a great American hero.

Rick’s story starts in 1943, not in America but in Cornwall, England. Cornwall is the Southwest

**Rick Rescorla,  
Ia Drang Valley  
November, 1965**



The Battle of Ia Drang is significant in our military history since it was the first major battle between regular US Army and North Vietnamese Army units who outnumbered us Americans about 2 to 1. Because of that distinction, the 1st Cav earned the only Presidential Citation awarded in the 10-year war. There were also three Medals of Honor, one Distinguished Service Cross and no telling how many Silver Stars awarded for valor in those five days. It was a hell of a fight which both sides claimed as victories. But all combat soldiers know there are no winners in the carnage of war.

However, during times of war, unique and rarely gifted human beings rise above the chaos and

section of England right on the English Channel. Four-year old Rick lives with his single mother and her parents when American soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division crowded into the area to prepare for the D-Day invasion. Rick’s mother tells her son the American soldiers are there to save them from Nazi Germany.

At that very moment—Rick, looking at the big, energetic soldiers dressed in their battle gear decided he wanted to be an American soldier—and he wanted to save people. That was the first step on a path which would lead then a four-year old Rick to meeting then a one-year old Pat Payne of Waco, Texas some 22 years later in Vietnam's Ia Drang Valley.



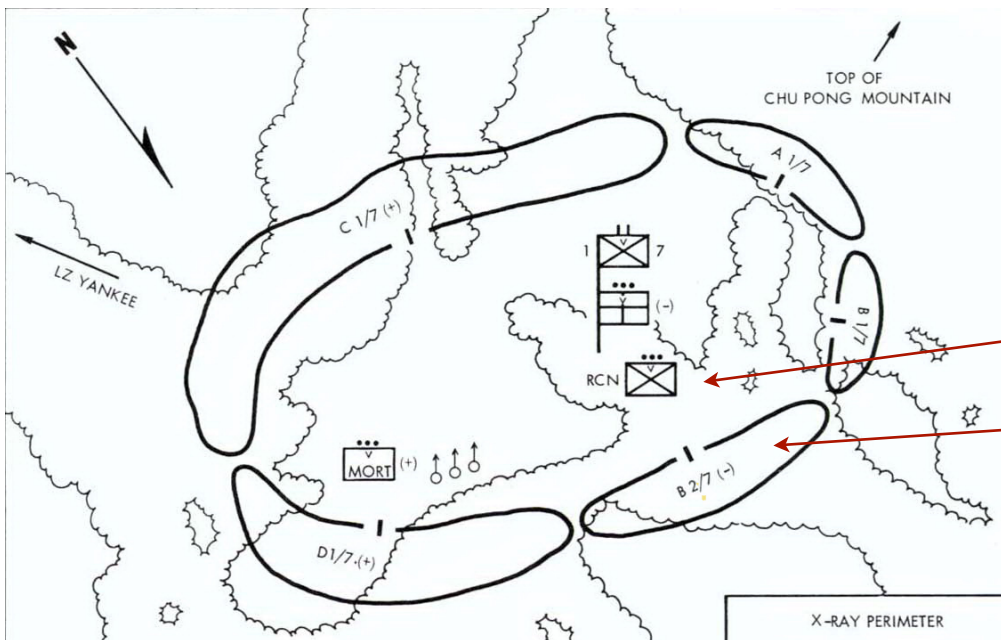
**General Eisenhower inspecting the 29th Infantry Division in Cornwall. The Division landed on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944.**



**British Army units in Cyprus**

Before getting into a Vietnam story, I think you'll be interested in knowing a bit of background on Rick. At age 17 he joined the British Army, training as a paratrooper. He was assigned to an Intelligence unit in Cyprus which is an island country off the coasts of Syria and Turkey. This is where Rick learned about Middle East cultures and religions. Rick's understanding of the Middle East plays a significant role as you will come to understand. Three years later he received an honorable discharge and then joined the British Rhodesia Police force as an inspector. In 1963, Rick followed his dream to America, enlisted in the US Army, went to Officers Candidate School at Ft. Benning, Georgia where he also attended Airborne school.

Rescorla was commissioned a 2nd Lt. in the US Army in 1964. Now, let's fast forward to a November night in 1965. The 7th Cav is virtually surrounded by three North Vietnamese Regiments on the Vietnam and Cambodian border. It is eerily quiet on a crystal clear, star filled night. 2nd Lt. Pat Payne, 23 years of age and just 60 days after setting foot on Vietnamese soil, is crouching next to 27 year old Rescorla who is quietly saying, "Forget what they told you in Ft. Benning Infantry Officer School about deploying your platoon among the trees. Look what I did here. We pulled back 50 yards from the tree line to make the bastards come across an open field so we can kill them."



In the Ia Drang Valley, LZ XRAY was the initial major battle between America and North Vietnamese regular army units.

2nd 7th Recon Platoon (Payne)

B Company, 2nd 7th (Rescorla)



**Lt. Colonel Hal Moore was the Battalion Commander of 1/7th Cavalry at LZ XRAY in November, 1965. Hal graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point in 1945 and retired 32 years later in 1977 as a Lt. General. Many believe, as I do, that Hal was among the greatest combat leaders in the Vietnam War.**

## MEN OF HARLECH!

I'm thinking to myself, what the heck is going on here? A guy with a British accent is telling me to forget the stuff I was taught at Ft. Benning. Then I looked over the 50 yard deep kill zone in front of us and there lay a stack of dead North Vietnamese soldiers. So I figure this guy is worth listening to. I go back to my Recon platoon, which was in reserve about 50 yards behind Rescorla's position, and waited for the attack. As the night became early morning, we began to hear the faint sounds of movement coming from the tree line as the NVA moved into position to attack—just as they had done the previous night. Then, as clear and as loud as you have ever heard at any opera you ever attended, came the booming baritone voice of Rescorla singing the Welsh military battle song, "Men of Harlech". A song which came from the 1964 movie "Zulu" starring Michael Caine which I had seen! The chorus goes like this...

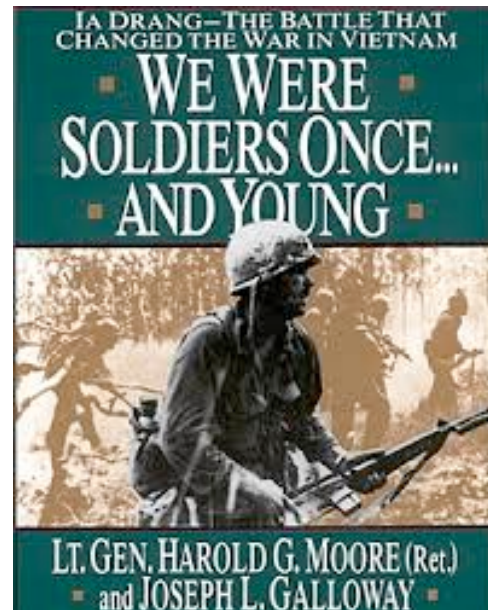
***"Men of Harlech stop your dreaming, Can't  
you see their spearpoints gleaming?,  
See their warriors' pennants streaming, To  
this battlefield.***

***Men of Harlech stand ye steady, It cannot be  
ever said ye for the battle were not ready  
Stand and never yield!"[3]***

Can you believe this! Here we are in a battle zone, surrounded by North Vietnamese troops in a remote section of Vietnam right on the border of Cambodia. And this guy is belting out a song from a movie. He had a great voice too. As he finishes the song, he then shouts, "Fix Bayonets"! I have to tell you I was SHOCKED. This was like a war movie and Rick was playing the part reserved for John Wayne. The good news is we "stood and never yielded" our ground through that night attack. The picture on the cover of the book is in fact of Rescorla with his bayonet attached in LZ XRAY in November, 1965. Rick was a great combat leader.



Michael Caine starred in 1964 war epic Zulu. It depicted the Battle of Rorke's Drift between the British Army and the Zulus in 1879. There 150 British soldiers successfully held the fort against a force of 4,000 Zulu warriors.



Published in 1992 the book was a New York Times best-seller. It was adapted into the movie, "We Were Soldiers", directed by Randall Wallace and starring Mel Gibson. The film's final version, despite getting many of the facts of the book presented onto film, is not entirely an historically accurate portrayal of the battle.





**Rick Rescorla, Director of Security for Morgan Stanley in the south tower of the World Trade Center.**

Time passes and a highly decorated Rescorla is Honorably Discharged a few years later. Rick becomes a US citizen, graduates from the University of Oklahoma and then earns a law degree. He teaches for a while before going into the security business. Eventually he ends up as Director of Security for Morgan Stanley which, as

fate would have it, housed their 2,700 employees in the South Tower of the WTC.

You may recall, in 1993 the first terrorist attack on the WTC was made with a truck bomb in the basement of the North Tower. After that attack, Rescorla gathered security industry experts who concluded the terrorist would attack the WTC again and would do it by flying airplanes full of fuel into the buildings. Rick explained that based on his Cyprus experience, Islam extremists would never give up on hitting such a symbolic American icon. After Morgan Stanley, which had 22 floors of employees from the 74th floor down, refused to move its employees out of the building, Rescorla got an agreement to conduct quarterly evacuation drills. Now think about this for a moment. Recall the fire drills in school or possibly in your office building. How they were a huge interruption to deal with and everyone thought they were a total waste. Now picture what management of Morgan Stanley thought about these drills Rick insisted on, but Rescorla refused to stop the exercises.

On that fateful day in 2001, the North Tower was struck first at 8:46 a.m. Within minutes, the NY Port Authority broadcasted an announcement telling South Tower employees to stay calm and stay in their offices to await further direction. Rescorla immediately got on the Morgan Stanley internal speaker system and told the 22 floors of employees, "Forget what they just told you about staying in your offices. Start evacuating the same as we drill every quarter. Begin moving to the stairwells now."

Do Rick's words sound very similar to what he told me that night in the Ia Drang Valley? Forget what "they" told you...do what I say instead. Rescorla

grabbed his bullhorn speaker and with his staff went to the stairwell to herd all 22 floors of employees to safety. Seventeen minutes later, while the employees were still moving down the stairwells, the South Tower was hit. When the lights went out, the employees began to panic. Rick calmed them by singing "God Bless America" over a bullhorn and encouraged everyone to "be proud to be an American." Many of the employees said they also heard Rescorla singing, "Men of Harlech"—the very same song he sang on that crystal clear November night in the Ia Drang Valley 36 years before.

After ensuring 2,700 plus employees were safe Rick re-

entered the burning South Tower telling his staff he was returning to the Morgan Stanley offices to help evacuate the handicap employees. The South Tower collapsed at 9:56—just 53 minutes after it was hit. Rick and the bodies of the other 3,000 people who died on September 11, 2001 were never recovered.



**The south tower is struck at 9:03 a.m. on September 11, 2001.**

In almost a storybook way, Rick had lived his dream—some might say his destiny—to become an American soldier and to save lives. Just like his mother told him in 1943—the Americans were going to save him from Nazi Germany.

### So what can we learn from Rick's story?

To me it seems to be that each of us—by constructive actions—can help a countless number of people essentially forever. Unless Rick had told me how to deploy my recon platoon, myself and all 30 of my men most likely would have died the next day. I have three children and 8 grandchildren who would never have seen the light of day. Now think about the 2,700 Morgan Stanley employees he saved and do the math. Thousands of people walking this earth today and the generations they create in the future will feel the sun on their faces and enjoy the riches of life because of what one man did. So I would ask you do me a favor on Monday. Sometime on Memorial Day think about Rick Rescorla, a great American. Maybe pass along this memory by telling someone a bit about

this amazing man or Google his name to find out more about him. If you ever go to Ground Zero in NYC be sure to find Rick's plaque at S-46 and think about all the people he saved both living and yet to be born.

Thanks for listening to my memory of a great American. I hope you agree he is a man well worth remembering. God Bless America...



**From Left: Hank Dunn, Rick Rescorla and Pat Payne at an la Drang reunion in circa 1998.**

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Richard Cyril Rescorla

ALI MALAHI	JOSEPH JOHN KELLER	BRETT OWEN FREIMAN	TODD RUSSELL HILL	INGEBORG JOSEPH	IRA ZASLOW	ROSE M
SAIYA	DAVID ALAN JAMES RATHKEY	GODWIN FORDE	TITUS DAVIDSON	NOLBERT SALOMON		KLAUS JOHA
ASPER BAXTER	COURTNEY WAINSWORTH WALCOTT	STEVEN R. STRAUSS	THOMAS F. SWIFT	JENNIFER DE JESUS		DIANT
AKOVA	MELISSA CANDIDA DOI	JOSEPH DI PILATO	ALBERT GUNNIS JOSEPH	<b>RICHARD CYRIL RESCORLA</b>		WESLEY MER
STINA MILLAN	KAREN HELENE SCHMIDT	MICHAEL W. LOWE	CHARLES A. LAURENCIN	LINDSAY C. HERKNES III		JOR

**Richard Cyril Rescorla**  
May 27, 1939–September 11, 2001  
**BORN IN:** Cornwall, England, United Kingdom  
**LIVED IN:** Morristown, New Jersey  
**GROUP:** World Trade Center, South Pool  
**EMPLOYER:** Morgan Stanley [SHOW](#)