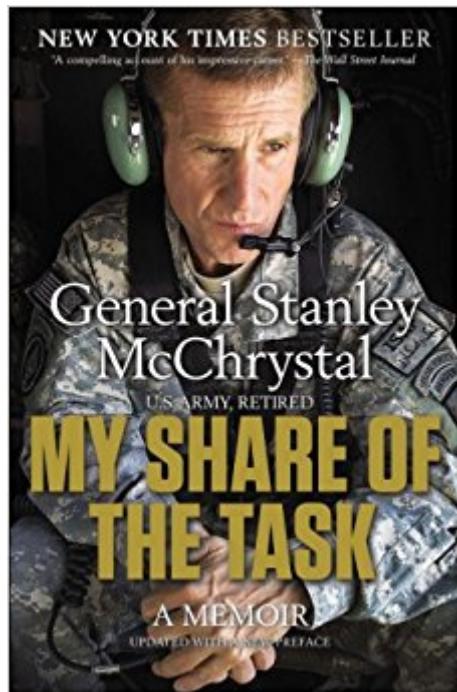


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# My Share Of The Task: A Memoir



## Synopsis

"General McChrystal is a legendary warrior with a fine eye for enduring lessons about leadership, courage, and consequence." -Tom Brokaw General Stanley McChrystal is widely admired for his hunger to know the truth, his courage to find it, and his humility to listen to those around him. Even as the commanding officer of all U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan, he stationed himself forward and frequently went on patrols with his troops to experience their challenges firsthand. In this illuminating New York Times bestseller, McChrystal frankly explores the major episodes and controversies of his career. He describes the many outstanding leaders he served with and the handful of bad leaders he learned not to emulate. And he paints a vivid portrait of how the military establishment turned itself, in one generation, into the adaptive, resilient force that would soon be tested in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the wider War on Terror. "A compelling account of his impressive career." -The Wall Street Journal "This is a brilliant book about leadership wrapped inside a fascinating personal narrative." -Walter Isaacson, author of Steve Jobs Stanley McChrystal retired in July 2010 as a four-star general in the U.S. Army. His last assignment was as the commander of the International Security Assistance Force and as the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. He is currently a senior fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs and cofounder of the McChrystal Group, a leadership consulting firm. He and his wife, Annie, live in Virginia.

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## Customer Reviews

"General McChrystal is a legendary warrior with a fine eye for enduring lessons about

leadership, courage, and consequence. He took me inside the command bunker, on nighttime raids, and through the fog of war, political and military. My Share of the Task is an important, riveting, and instructive account of the triumphs and trials of America’s two longest wars.

•TOM BROKAW, author of *The Greatest Generation* “Written in the tradition of Ulysses S. Grant, *My Share of the Task* is a clear, compelling, self-critical, and utterly unpretentious memoir. I know of no better book on the nature of modern military command.”

•JOHN LEWIS GADDIS, author of *George F. Kennan: An American Life* “This is a brilliant book about leadership wrapped inside a fascinating personal narrative. By describing his own life, and especially his command in Afghanistan, General McChrystal helps us understand the modern missions of the military. More than that, he provides lessons about leadership and values that are indispensable in our daily lives. It’s a deeply inspiring tale.”

•WALTER ISAACSON, author of *Steve Jobs* and *Benjamin Franklin* “Stanley McChrystal has written the finest military memoir of his generation. Lucid, thoughtful, and steeped in military and strategic history, *My Share of the Task* is not just the story of one man’s service; it is the story of the development of a new way of war. This book is not just for aficionados of military history or for students of American foreign policy; it’s for anyone who wants to understand the challenges of leadership in America today.”

•WALTER RUSSELL MEAD, author of *Special Providence* and *God and Gold* “A remarkable memoir by one of the most exceptional and thoughtful leaders of his generation.”

•RORY STEWART, author of *The Places in Between*

Stanley McChrystal retired in July 2010 as a four-star general in the U.S. Army. His last assignment was as the commander of the International Security Assistance Force and as the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. He is currently a senior fellow at Yale University’s Jackson Institute for Global Affairs and cofounder of the McChrystal Group, a leadership consulting firm. He and his wife, Annie, live in Virginia.

This memoir runs through the key events in General McChrystal’s military career, but the most interesting sections, relevant in 2015, describe his leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Republicans and Democrats seem to agree that the Iraq war was a mistake, and that is arguably true. Nevertheless, the US military had figured out how to effectively win in Iraq and Afghanistan and keep the peace, which is a remarkably feat. You will gain insight into how this came to be under the “surge.” You will better understand why some claim that pulling troops out later led to the current

chaos in Iraq, and has the potential to repeat in Afghanistan. The General does not address in any detail the two main controversies he was involved in (Pat Tilman and the Rolling Stone interview). He writes about the Commander in Chief in nothing but respectful language. If you are looking for more on these controversies, you will not find it, maybe not surprisingly. You will find insightful descriptions of how the military works, solves problems at a high level, and works with our diplomatic core and foreign allies. You will see how *\*good\** our military really can be.

Remarkable book by a remarkable man who not only shares his experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, but most importantly teaches the readers the life lessons he has learned in what makes a leader and the leadership qualities that are important for people of all walks of life. Stanley McChrystal is a humble, empathetic, compassionate man who cares about the lives of all people, whether his troops or the lives of Afghan and Iraqi civilians. He shares the various leadership qualities good and bad from those he has served alongside with and helps the reader take the journey with him through all the ups and downs of battle. As aforementioned, the leadership qualities that he has come to learn through both an intellectual grasp of history as well as those who served above him and with him enables the reader to become a more nuanced and appreciative person of the qualities important for our daily lives. *\*Highly recommended\**.

This is a fine book written by a real hero and a great and very effective leader. I echo the comments of many others who praise this book and its author, but the book also tells some important truths about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>1</sup> The disbanding of the Iraqi army by J Paul Bremmer created much of the conflict in Iraq, and the balance of it was created by Al Qaeda which had not been established in Iraq prior to the war but was drawn to it by American presence.<sup>2</sup> Although Al Qaeda had had a haven in Afghanistan under the Taliban, by the time the author was in command there Al Qaeda had either been decimated or moved on to other places. During the author's relation of his time in command in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda barely merits a mention; it's all about the Taliban. The author was supremely effective in waging war, but his telling of the story seems to support the idea that mission creep had changed the focus from hunting down Al Qaeda to "nation building" in Afghanistan. Gen. McChrystal and his forces did extremely well at everything they did. Should we be spending our blood and terror on this effort is a separate question the answer to which is far less clear. This is a good read for those who want to know what actually happened. There are villains in the story other than the Taliban and Al Qaeda, but you must read between the lines to find them. General McChrystal wisely avoids identifying them, but they emerge for a careful

reader.

This book is excellent. It has a little something for everything. The style of writing is great. The book flows like water from chapter to chapter. You will feel like you talked to the General personally after reading it. I think this will be one of the premier books on leadership and war. The reader will get a good summary of war at the largest levels. At that point the picture is different. You will learn a lot about the strategy for the war in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He is very detailed about the who, what, why, when of the conflict. What an amazing memory. The book also has some great insights to leadership. His style is inspirational just from reading it. His personal touch to things is very unique. You can also tell that he is a very passionate, and compassionate leader dedicated to country and mission. This guy walked a patrol in Afghanistan. There aren't many 4 stars that do that nowadays. I know everyone will want to read about the conflict with the President which filled the papers. There is only a few pages of that conflict. Most of the book material in the book is about the war. Through those examples and stories I think the nonmilitary person will gain from it.

This is an outstanding book on effective leadership principals. It's not about leadership theory, but practical, real-life examples during two dangerous wars against terrorist organizations. I think it's a must reader for young leaders. I love the fact that General McChrystal didn't take a political position; it's not another "Tell All" novel. He's an engaging leader who cares about this team. He wants their input from all levels. This is usual for military leaders. General McChrystal is a commissioned officer who valued non-commissioned officers (NCO) input and services. As an old NCO, I would have loved to serve under General McChrystal's command. Although this book was written about our military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, it's real about leadership principals that can be applied in any organization. I love the General's view and study of military history. I also loved his approach to his job, his commitment to family and his dedication to stay in shape. I'm now getting up every day at 5:30 am and working out because the General is up and running at 4:30 am. In summary, an outstanding book on leadership, a detailed view of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and valuable insights on the working of the military and its working relationship with other governmental organizations.

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