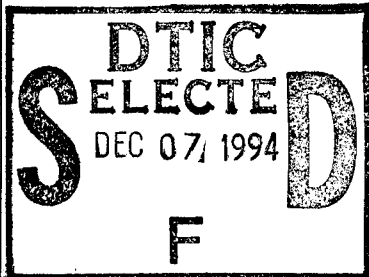


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A Man's Flight Through Life: A Leadership Profile of General Jerome F. O'Malley



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ABSTRACT

General Jerry O'Malley was a practical yet charismatic leader who attained the rank of four-star general in 32 years of Air Force service. His charismatic leadership style was the result of a unique balance of priorities: caring for people and getting the mission done. He demonstrated 21st century leadership, pulling rather than pushing, before the concept was in vogue. This paper shows that nice people can finish first, he led by example, and his confidence was built on past successes.

The evidence first unfolds through his leadership principles:

- ① Integrity
- ② Job knowledge
- ③ Sensitivity toward others
- ④ Be yourself, and
- ⑤ Communicate.

He embraced these principles from childhood to the highest ranks of Air Force leadership.

General O'Malley and his wife, Diane, were a special blend of warm, caring personalities. Together they touched the Air Force and its members in a way people still remember fondly.

By examining his principles and how he lived them, people can better understand the man and the wisdom he shared with the military.

Author: Sandra A. Gregory, Lt Colonel, USAF

Title of Paper: "A Man's Flight Through Life: A Leadership Profile of General Jerome F. O'Malley"

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General Jerry O'Malley was a practical yet charismatic leader who attained the rank of four-star general in 32 years of Air Force service. His charismatic leadership style was the result of a unique balance of priorities: caring for people and getting the mission done. He demonstrated 21st century leadership, pulling rather than pushing, before the concept was in vogue. This paper shows that nice people can finish first, he led by example, and his confidence was built on past successes.

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FOREWORD and ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Doing a research project about General O'Malley has intrigued me for a number of years. I was a 26-year-old Air Force captain at the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) headquarters at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, when I first met General and Mrs. Jerome F. O'Malley. While serving as the executive officer to the PACAF Deputy Chief of Staff, Comptroller, I was the assigned sponsor for General O'Malley's aide, Captain W. Bryant Dougherty. Bryant introduced me to the O'Malleys, and they inspired me in my career and personal life. His leadership and her complementing qualities are still vivid examples in my mind.

Some people believed that Bryant Dougherty would write the first study of General O'Malley, but Bryant died of cancer in May 1990; the task was left to others.

The research was made possible by early encouragement from the O'Malley family. They provided potential interviewees' names, inspiration, meaningful interviews, and supporting documentation. My husband, Tom Bradley, spent many hours editing and, Frances Sedberry, our boys' terrific nanny, kept our sons away from the study and computer for days, so I could work on this project. My thanks go to them both. A special thanks to Dr. Alan Gropman, who, as my advisor, cautioned me, but supported this undertaking.

The O'Malleys attracted fun-loving friends and true professionals; this project showed it many times as I conducted the research and interviews. All the interviews and letters were helpful in cross-checking ideas and painting this leadership profile. This Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) research project was limited in time and scope; however, the notes are being preserved for possible expansion.

A heartfelt thanks to the following for their interviews and other contributions:

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The ICAF experience has been a wonderful place and perfect time to reflect on the qualities General O'Malley espoused. Hopefully this leadership mosaic will shed light for the future leaders among us and for those who enjoy remembering how inspiring he and Diane were as an exemplary Air Force couple.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The setting was a general officer's house at Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C. Muffled sounds of conversations and the clinking of ice cubes in glasses permeated the cocktail party. It was just another party, but then a guest asked the hostess, "What's happened? All of a sudden there's lots of activity and laughter." The hostess replied, "The O'Malleys have arrived."¹

This setting was repeated throughout the lives of General Jerome F. (Jerry) O'Malley and his wife, Diane. It represents part of their legend; as they rose to the top, they kept a common touch and had fun along the way. Some observers said they danced with kings and walked with common people.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the leadership of the late General Jerome O'Malley. His 32 years of United States Air Force leadership left a legend that will stand the test of time. The following chapters show that

- ❶ Nice people can finish first;
- ❷ He led by example; and
- ❸ His confidence was built on past successes.

Quality styles of leadership are buzzwords today, but the substance behind great leaders remains as secrets to be unlocked and dissected by future generations. General O'Malley had a rare balance of leadership qualities. He was balanced between mission accomplishment and people's needs. General O'Malley prepared the Air Force for 21st Century leadership. He lived as a quality leader before it was a fashionable word. People would have followed him anywhere to accomplish the mission . . . and did.

¹Story told by Father Henry Meade, Maj Gen, USAF, retired, in the O'Malley eulogy, April 1985. Author attended funeral and VCR tape of the O'Malley funeral was sent to the author by Lt Gen Albert Edmonds, USAF.

Chapter Two is a sketch of his life from his birth in 1932 until his death in 1985. This chapter acquaints the reader with General O'Malley. It shows the qualities that set him apart in the Air Force were evident in his youth.

Chapter Three, the heart of the paper, concentrates on his leadership principles: **integrity, job knowledge, sensitivity to others, being yourself, and communications.** Examples in each of these categories show he practiced these principles. His speeches and personal examples shared through numerous interviews provide substance to each principle. As one of his senior enlisted advisors described him, "General O'Malley reeked with leadership by example."²

The fourth chapter explains the ingredients of his success. It supports the conclusion that his confidence as a senior leader was built on past successes, and is subdivided to further explain his:

- ✪ **Youth**
- ✪ **Experiences at West Point and the U S Air Force Academy**
- ✪ **Air Force seasoning**
- ✪ **Supportive wife and family**

Lessons can be gleaned from his leadership principles and the ways he garnered successes throughout his life, but the fifth chapter describes other lessons. It illustrates additional ways General O'Malley put leadership into action through trusting people, balancing priorities, applying a vision and dedication, and appealing to the intellectual and caring sides of people.

Chapter Six provides conclusions. This research only begins to examine the man and his leadership. Examples are numerous and the stories could go on; but the author's purpose, highlighting General O'Malley's leadership, is fulfilled to the extent that the reader can see he was worth remembering as one of the best leaders the Air Force ever had.

²Telephone interview on Feb 17, 1994, with Chief Master Sergeant Richard P.E. Cook, USAF, retired, Tactical Air Command's Senior Enlisted Advisor, 1981-85.

CHAPTER TWO: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Before looking at General Jerome (Jerry) O'Malley's leadership, it is important to sketch his entire life. This chapter highlights his childhood briefly and outlines his military career until his death in a T-39 airplane crash near his hometown at the Wilkes-Barre Scranton Airport, Pennsylvania, on April 20, 1985.

Young Jerry O'Malley was born in Carbondale, Pennsylvania, on February 25, 1932, to Mary Mabel and James O'Malley³ after five unsuccessful pregnancies. One pregnancy did produce an older brother, Jimmy, Jr., but he lived only one day. Needless to say, Jerry was treated as a treasure: much wanted by a couple who had experienced pain and loss. Jerry was soon joined by two sisters, Jane and Ellen, in 1934 and 1938, respectively, completing the O'Malley family. However, six years after Jerry's birth, his father died in 1938.

James O'Malley had been exposed to mustard gas while serving in the US Army in World War I. Military doctors told him he had 20 years to live. Despite deteriorating lungs, Jimmy O'Malley remained active in several occupations: an insurance business, stationery store, and pharmacy. Jerry's father loved people and was very popular in this Pennsylvania coal-mining town of about 25,000. In his spare time, Jimmy supported the arts by becoming involved in community plays and minstrel shows and bringing name entertainment to the area. Jimmy tried not to let the effects of the poison gas slow him down. Sadly, the doctors had given an accurate prediction, for Jimmy O'Malley died when expected.⁴ Mabel now alone raised six-year-old Jerry and his four-year-old and two-month-old sisters.

Mabel was a small-framed, but stout, Irish extrovert who loved her family and politics. To assist her with raising this young family, her sister-in-law Kathryn O'Malley moved into the home.

³Mary Mabel O'Malley was born in 1898; James "Jimmy" O'Malley was born in 1895.

⁴Jimmy O'Malley died 20 years from the exact date of the doctor's prediction.

With a veteran's pension for monetary support and a promise to her husband that she would never work outside the home, Mabel O'Malley manage to provide a comfortable and stable home environment for her family. The warm home provided a comfortable gathering place for family friends and undoubtedly laid the foundation for a very happy childhood and adolescence.⁵

Jerry attended Saint Rose's Catholic School in Carbondale, Pennsylvania, through high school. Schoolmates remember Jerry as a gifted student with an analytical mind, an athlete, and a leader. He was the salutatorian of his graduating Class of 1949, of 50 students. College was his next step.

Although Jerry had considered several eastern Catholic colleges, he leaned toward West Point. The influence of cousins who had served in the Navy during World War II and of his father, who had regretted not staying in the military, undoubtedly affected Jerry's decision to serve his country.⁶

During his sophomore and junior years in high school, after briefly contemplating the priesthood, Jerry sought an appointment to the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, New York. As the son of a deceased veteran, he tested and qualified for a presidential appointment. President Harry S. Truman appointed him to the USMA Class of 1953.

His years at West Point were another link to his leadership development. His peers especially remember him as a fast-riser during his last two years at the academy. He was a talented athlete, a consensus builder and a solid cadet. Approaching graduation from West Point, Jerry requested and was approved for a commission in the US Air Force.⁷

His first Air Force assignment in the summer of 1953 was pilot training at Bryan Air Force Base, Texas, with follow-on jet training in F-86 Sabrejets at Perrin Air Force Base, Texas. In

⁵They had the first house until Jerry was a junior in high school. During his freshman year in high school, however, the front yard collapsed because of underground coal mining activity. The family stayed for another two years before moving. Both homes were very happy places and were frequently filled with friends.

⁶A close friend, Lt Gen Al Casey, USAF, retired, claims he and Jerry both became interested in military academies after watching a corny movie about West Point. This was per telephone discussions between the author and Lt Gen Casey, Dec 1993 - Jan 1994.

⁷Air Force assignment chronology is in "Biography of Gen Jerome F. O'Malley." United States Air Force, Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C. (current as of January 1985).

Texas he met beautiful, petite, blonde Diane Muennink of Hondo, Texas.⁸ They married on April 16, 1955. Diane was the key partner in his success.⁹

After pilot training in 1955, Jerry was one of 140 carefully screened lieutenants who eventually became air training officers (ATOs) for the newly created US Air Force Academy (USAFA) at its preliminary home at Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado. These ATOs, whom came from all commissioning sources, were to serve as surrogate upperclassmen to the first class entering at the USAFA. After the ATO assignment, he moved to the cockpit of a B-47 at Plattsburgh Air Force Base in New York for two years. In 1960 he was selected as an aide to General Hunter Harris, the Eighth Air Force commander at Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts. General Harris went on to be the vice commander of the Strategic Air Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska. Jerry was aide to General Harris at both locations.

After serving as an aide for four long years to a tough general, Jerry was relieved to finally be reassigned. He was promoted to major on 1 July 1964 and sent to the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. Jerry finished in 1965 as a distinguished graduate¹⁰ and concurrently finished a master's degree in business administration from the George Washington University, Washington, D.C. He then returned to flying.

From 1965 to 1969 as a major and lieutenant colonel, O'Malley was a pilot in the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Beale Air Force Base, California. There he made aviation history when he flew the first operational mission of the SR-71 Blackbird, the world's most advanced strategic reconnaissance aircraft.¹¹

⁸Hondo, Texas still has a sign outside the city limits, "Welcome to Hondo, Texas. This is God's Country, so please don't drive through it like Hell." This sign gives the casual observer a quick idea of the flavor of the region.

⁹They had four children: Margaret "Peggy" Anne, Sharon Kay, James Francis and John Thomas. It was years later when General O'Malley told his adolescent son, Jimmy, that "the most important decision you make is the spouse you choose." This insight was shared during a Mar 8, 1994, telephone interview with Capt Jimmy O'Malley. Jimmy stated back then he realized how very important his mother was in his father's life.

¹⁰Distinguished graduate designates the top ten percent of the class.

¹¹This SR-71A which first flew operationally on March 21, 1968, from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, was tail number 976. This aircraft now rests in the USAF Museum at Dayton, Ohio. Crickmore, Paul F., *Lockheed SR-71, The Secret Missions Exposed*, 1993. Note: The SR-71 fleet was retired from the Air Force shortly before Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

He was reassigned from the cockpit in July 1969 to the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. As an indicator of his successful career and bright future, O'Malley was promoted to colonel in November 1969, five years ahead of normal progression. After completing the final step in professional military education, O'Malley moved to Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, in the summer of 1970 to fly RF-4Cs and to be the deputy commander for operations in the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing. Next he rotated to Southeast Asia.

In 1971 he served as vice commander and later commander of the 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, near Saigon, Republic of Vietnam. With the drawdown and relocation of some of the RF-4 squadrons in Southeast Asia, he was assigned as vice commander of the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW), Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, whose commander was Colonel Charles Gabriel, who later became Air Force Chief of Staff.¹² The Gabriel-O'Malley team would reappear later in the Pentagon as both three- and four-star generals on the Air Staff. While in Southeast Asia, O'Malley flew 116 combat missions in F-4Ds and RF-4Cs. A later chapter will describe the importance of this assignment.

Upon completion of the Thailand tour, he returned to Beale Air Force Base as wing commander of the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, followed by another wing command position, 22nd Bombardment Wing, at March Air Force Base, California. While at March he later served as chief of staff for Fifteenth Air Force, concluding his years as a colonel.¹³

As a new general officer in July 1974, he served at Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, as the assistant deputy chief of staff for plans and later as the deputy chief of staff, operations plans. In the latter capacity he had the significant additional duty as chief, Single Integrated Operational Plan Division, on the Joint Strategic

¹²Capt Charles Gabriel was also assigned to the USAFA as an Air Officer Commanding during the initial phases of the new academy. Although Captain Gabriel was in the USMA Class of 1950, he did not know Jerry O'Malley until they met at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado, in 1955. Per interview on Dec 28, 1993, with Gen Charles Gabriel, USAF, retired.

¹³He served as a colonel from November 1, 1969, until September 1, 1974, when he became a brigadier general.

Targeting Planning Staff. He earned a second star in May 1977 shortly before moving to Washington, D.C.

He couldn't foresee that he would stay in the Pentagon for more than six years. Although SAC Headquarters frequently required temporary duties to Washington for briefings and to negotiate issues with the Joint Staff and the Air Staff, his first immersion in senior leadership roles in the Pentagon began when he arrived in January 1977. His first assignment was to the Joint Staff. As the vice director for operations, J-3, Joint Staff, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After two years of fast-paced joint operations, General O'Malley was reassigned to the Air Staff.¹⁴

On the Air Staff, he climbed the ladder as assistant deputy and later deputy chief of staff, operations, plans, and readiness (AF/XO), a three-star position. This key position led him to become the vice chief of staff as a new four-star general (June 1982).¹⁵ The six years near the Potomac proved very fruitful for General O'Malley, but it was time for the Air Force to send him to a major command for additional "grooming."¹⁶ The Pacific Air Forces, headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii, was the selected command.

General O'Malley became the commander in chief of the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) in October 1983. While in Hawaii, he worked diligently toward his goal of "taking a good command and making it better."¹⁷ He renewed friendships with military and political leaders of America's friends in the Pacific basin and gained a close working relationship with Admiral William Crowe, the commander in chief of the Pacific Command. This PACAF position was a steppingstone to

¹⁴In a speech to the National War College (NWC). Spring 1985. Gen O'Malley remarked about his D.C. tour... "I first got to D.C. as a Maj Gen, and if I had to do it over again, that's the way I'd do it." [Gen O'Malley laughed with the audience of NWC students.] A tape of this NWC speech was provided by Maj Gen John Jumper during interview on Nov 22, 1993.

¹⁵Lt Gen Gabriel was the AF/XO when Maj Gen O'Malley was the assistant AF/XO. Gen O'Malley served as the vice chief of staff when Gen Gabriel was the chief of staff of the Air Force.

¹⁶Comments made during telephone interview on Jan 19, 1994, with Mr Verne Orr, Secretary of the Air Force during Gen O'Malley's tenure as a four-star general.

¹⁷This phrase was used during his PACAF change of command ceremony in October 1983, and was used later in other speeches General O'Malley made. Author attended change of command ceremony.

his next job, the one he held when he and his wife were killed: commander of the Tactical Air Command (TAC), Langley Air Force Base, Virginia.¹⁸

This brief look into his childhood, educational experiences, and assignments creates the foundation for the next stage: his leadership principles. These principles and the way he applied them were his hallmarks as a great leader.

¹⁸Gen O'Malley assumed command of TAC in September 1984.

CHAPTER THREE: HIS LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

If somebody asked, "What leadership principles did General O'Malley most believe in?" the answer would clearly point to these five: **integrity, job knowledge, sensitivity to others, being yourself, and communications**. In his rise to four-star rank, Jerry O'Malley built his reputation on these fundamental principles, which were tested time and time again throughout his career. He led by example and, as a senior leader, he frequently discussed his commitment to these leadership principles with a wide range of audiences.

Whenever General O'Malley addressed these leadership principles, he emphasized that three of the five were not unique to him. He and General Gabriel agreed on the first three: integrity, job knowledge and sensitivity to others. This is not surprising because they had known each other for years and served together, including combat in Southeast Asia, on four occasions. Their concurrent assignments were indicators for the Air Force's future:

1. 1955-1957: First Lieutenant O'Malley was an air training officer at the newly formed US Air Force Academy (USAFA) while Captain Gabriel was an air officer commanding for the first USAFA classes;
2. 1971-1972: Colonel O'Malley was the vice commander of the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW) at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, while Colonel Gabriel was the commander;
3. 1979-1980: in the Pentagon, Major General O'Malley was the assistant deputy chief of staff, operations, on the Air Staff while Lieutenant General Gabriel was the deputy chief of staff, Operations, Plans, and Readiness; and
4. 1982-1983: General O'Malley was the Air Force's vice chief of staff while General Gabriel was the chief of staff.

A closer look at how General O'Malley described and practiced leadership puts his career into meaningful perspective.

★ **Integrity**

In describing the importance of integrity to a group of chief master sergeants General O'Malley said, "It's number one on the chief's [chief of staff's] list; it's properly number one on my list; and I think it is obvious that in the military, integrity is an indispensable quality for successful leadership." General O'Malley went on to say, "You can cheat and lie to yourself in business and even make money, but we can't afford to in the military because it cost lives." He highlighted two types of integrity: personal and institutional.¹⁹

In this speech to the chiefs he said, "I include under 'integrity' such things as turf fighting and game playing, because they contribute to and detract from institutional integrity."²⁰ To further expand upon this issue, his 1985 address to the National War College class led to specific questions from students about institutional integrity and the integrity issues he faced as the vice commander of the 432nd TRW in Thailand.²¹ In his answer about institutional integrity, the general included specific examples about game playing in budget exercises and attitudes among Air Force Academy cadets.

Regarding budget building, he said, (paraphrased), "We [the Air Force leadership] sometimes took decrements to programs knowing Congress or the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) would certainly add the dollars back."²² This clearly shows game playing, and it's detrimental to institutional integrity.

The USAFA Honor Code, "We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does," was one of the integrity topics addressed in his reply to a National War College

¹⁹Gen O'Malley discussed his leadership principles in a speech to the Chiefs' Group (an organization of chief master sergeants) during his tenure as commander in chief of the Pacific Air Forces: date unknown. Author received copy of the speech from Maj Kim Dougherty.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹National War College (NWC), part of the National Defense University (NDU), is located at Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C. As the TAC commander, Gen O'Malley addressed the NWC in the Spring of 1985.

²²Ibid.

student. As one of the three air training officers who had taught the honor code at the new academy, General O'Malley reminded the audience it was the cadets who voted unanimously to adopt an honor code similar to the one used at West Point. In the 1980s, policy changes for enforcing the Honor Code made stronger use of the cadet chain of command. Overall, General O'Malley thought integrity was inculcated better in later years at the Air Force Academy and generally the Air Force's integrity had improved each year. He further stressed to the NWC class that they must "be just as honest with the institution as with your friends."²³

General O'Malley's institutional integrity was tested when he was the vice commander of the 432nd TRW in Thailand during what became known as the Lavelle raids. General John Lavelle, 7th Air Force Commander, instructed his subordinate commanders to "not report any hostile action during these raids"²⁴ when referring to unauthorized targets north of the demilitarized zone (DMZ). In essence the commanders and crews in the 432nd were directed to lie about their raids in the north.

The Lavelle raids have been used as research and discussion topics on integrity at the senior service schools.²⁵ The following summarizes these protective reaction strikes:²⁶

The Rules of Engagement pertaining to protective reaction strikes over North Vietnam were intentionally violated in a number of instances to counter certain significant enemy threats. The violations were directed by the field commander [7th Air Force commander, General John Lavelle]. Irregular reporting procedures were used to prevent knowledge of the violations from surfacing. Upon discovery, the [7AF] commander was relieved, and subsequently voluntarily retired.

When a National War College student asked General O'Malley a question about his tour as the vice commander of the 432nd TRW, he vividly described the Lavelle raids and the circumstances leading to the results:

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid. Closely paraphrased from a tape recording of that 1985 NWC speech.

²⁵Ginsburg, Gordon A. Col. USAF, "The Lavelle Case: Crisis in Integrity," Report Number 5255, Air War College, Air University, April 1974. This report provides background on the Lavelle raids.

²⁶Olson, James R. Col, USAF, "Preplanned Protective Reaction Strikes: A Case Study on Integrity." A research report submitted to the faculty, Air War College, Air University, Report Number 5372, April 1974, page iii.

The raiding took place up North [Vietnam] . . . we ran reconce [reconnaissance] missions north of the DMZ . . . General Lavelle strongly thought we should be taking out other sites. We thought we had Washington's approval General Lavelle was severely chastised for these missions, and he was demoted from four to two stars. He retired in disgrace as a two-star general for these unauthorized targets.²⁷

The Lavelle raids represented a low point in Colonel O'Malley's tour in Southeast Asia, and he thought about resigning his commission over the Lavelle issue.²⁸ He was never punished for his part in the Lavelle raids, nor was he asked to testify before Congress on this matter. Colonel Gabriel did, however, testify before Congress on the Lavelle raids, and his brigadier general's promotion list was delayed until the Senate was satisfied with the investigations.²⁹

There is an abundance of examples when General O'Malley faced integrity issues. Some examples come from the "black" world of classified programs, in which he specialized because of his SR-71 experience. Integrity was crucial to the "black" world because many agreements were done on handshakes during his time in the Pentagon.³⁰ Trust was expected; anything less was unacceptable.

As the Air Force vice chief of staff, General O'Malley was instrumental in defending the funding for highly classified programs. In a particular budget and programming dispute with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), he fully supported the Air Force's Director of Programs (AF/PR), and together they succeeded in defending some programs. These disagreements often result in tenacious fights over dollars and programs. Integrity can be a key ingredient to winning support for a program. General O'Malley pushed hard for several classified programs because he believed they were essential to the country's defense.³¹

²⁷Closely paraphrased from a taped recording of that NWC speech. See note 21.

²⁸His comments about resigning were made to the author in an informal conversation with Gen O'Malley when he was commander in chief of the Pacific Air Forces. General O'Malley grew from this experience. He told the author and her husband in 1984 that, given similar circumstances again, he would not cooperate in the subterfuge unless he were sure the Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved the raids.

²⁹Interview discussions on Dec 28, 1993, with Gen Charles Gabriel, USAF, retired.

³⁰The reference to handshakes on agreements pertain to the classified programs only, not to the unclassified portions.

³¹Interview discussions on Nov 2, 1993, with Lt Gen Charles Cunningham, Jr, USAF, retired.

The case of a Swiss bank account also showed his beliefs on integrity. As the vice chief of staff, General O'Malley knew about an Air Force account used to handle some delicate Southeast Asian operations involving another US government agency. About four million dollars were in a non-interest-bearing account. The general officer overseeing the account had moved the money to a personal account to draw interest for himself; he returned the money to the Air Force account and retired before his activity was discovered. This did not set well with O'Malley.

General O'Malley wanted to prosecute. Key people on the Air Staff disagreed on the action because it didn't really cost the government any money. Lawyers predicted the Air Force would lose the case, but General O'Malley decided to try because it was best for the country to expose the wrongdoing. He firmly believed even if the Air Force lost the case, an important message would be sent to the Air Force at large. The Air Force lost the case, but General O'Malley's point was made.³²

As described by retired General Jack Chain, "There are three ways to enforce integrity: (1) to be a living example, (2) to have zero tolerance for those who don't practice integrity, and (3) to talk about the subject whenever we have a chance."³³ General O'Malley did all three.

In a speech General O'Malley summarized his thoughts on integrity: "Be true to yourself, be honest with your boss, and, most importantly, be honest and fair with the people who work for you."³⁴

His next leadership principle dealt with job knowledge.

★ **Job Knowledge**

General O'Malley emphasized in his speech to the PACAF Chiefs' Group, "People will forgive you for almost anything if you're trying to lead them and if you're working hard at it. But, they will not forgive you for ignorance, especially when you could have done something about

³²Interview discussions on Dec 3, 1993, with Maj Gen Perry Smith, USAF, retired.

³³Telephone interview on Jan 14, 1994, with Gen John "Jack" Chain, USAF, retired.

³⁴Chiefs' Group speech (note 19).

it."³⁵ He spoke along the same lines in his 1985 speech to the National War College students, "You won't lead them well if you don't know where you're going."³⁶ General O'Malley demonstrated throughout his career that he knew his job and knew where he was going.

General O'Malley had broad knowledge of many functions. He specifically knew flying operations during peace and war, space, reconnaissance, maintenance, programming, budgeting, congressional relationships, the Joint Staff, Strategic and Tactical Air Commands, and the Pacific Air Forces. He used knowledge as tools, and he used them very well. As one senior military person noted, "Jerry could talk eloquently about the impact to combat capability."³⁷ His diversity and communications skills proved unstoppable in many settings. In addition to his job knowledge, he surrounded himself with a winning team that synergized his effectiveness.

In his early career days at the USAFA, for example, some cadets thought of Lieutenant O'Malley as one of the "top three" air training officers. Several 1959 USAFA graduates said that he was clearly an outstanding officer. His leadership wasn't always appreciated; some cadets saw another side. He had a reputation for being stern, especially among a self-styled "Group of 14" pranksters.³⁸ After almost 40 years, General O'Malley's contributions, whether teaching the Honor Code or demonstrating athletic skills, are still remembered as noteworthy by his former students.³⁹

Major Jerry O'Malley also left his mark when he flew the first operational SR-71 mission on March 21, 1968. His air judgment and flying skills were primary reasons for his selection for the mission. As stated by General Russell Dougherty, former Commander of the Strategic Air Command, "In the SR-71 days Jerry was a "lead-the-fleet-guy" out front. Jerry was popular and

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶NWC speech (note 21).

³⁷Interview discussions on Nov 10, 1993, with Lt Gen Charles "Chuck" Blanton, USAF, retired.

³⁸This group played pranks such as "raids" on the air training officers and pushing a P-51 fighter off Lowry Air Force Base. Per interview discussions with Gen Carns on Nov 15, 1993.

³⁹Interviews and discussions with USAFA cadets from the class of 1959: Gen Michael P. C. Carns, Air Force vice chief of staff, interviewed on Nov 15, 1993; Lt Gen Bradley Hosmer, USAF, interviewed on Dec 9, 1993; Col Michael Reardon, USAFR, retired, interviewed on Nov 5, 1993.

exactly the person we wanted when going public with the airplane." He showed great confidence during a problem-filled pre-flight for this first mission:

As their cockpit canopies closed, minor problems appeared which threatened to jeopardize the mission. Firstly, Ed [Capt Ed Payne, the navigator] had no indication of cockpit pressurization. That glitch was remedied by simply advancing the engine rpm, which duly inflated the canopy seals. As Ed searched through the GO-No-GO checklist to determine the importance of the other minor discrepancies, Jerry said, "Well, Ed, do you want to be the first guy to abort an operational sortie, or the first to fly one?" Ed's response was predictable. "Kadena Tower, this is Beaver Five-Zero, radio check". To which the tower operator answered, "Five-Zero you are loud and clear, and cleared to taxi."⁴⁰

His belief in and knowledge of space operations and their importance caused General O'Malley to be one of the leading crusaders for a separate Space Command. It's rumored that General Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, Commanding General of the US Army Air Forces during World War II, had said many years earlier, "Space is our future." General O'Malley was in a position as the Air Force's director of operations and later as the vice chief to highlight the importance of space operations. His knowledge of space issues increased rapidly and was powerful enough to convince skeptics, as the following anecdote shows.

At one point in the early 1980s the Air Force's operations staff needed to answer the question, "What would a Space Command do that we're not already doing?" General O'Malley asked for a briefing to provide him ideas and concepts. However, all was not as anticipated on that day in the Pentagon. After about the third slide, he said, "Stop. This is the same . . . thing you've been trying to do for three years. Go back and re-think this one." A later briefing provided the information he needed.⁴¹

⁴⁰Crickmore, Paul F., *Lockheed SR-71 The Secret Missions Exposed*, 1993, page 2.

⁴¹Interview discussions on Nov 3, 1993, with Maj Gen John Storrie. USAF. retired.

In the early 1980s an Air Force Council (AFC)⁴² meeting offered Lieutenant General O'Malley an opportunity to gain space operations support. Representing Air Force operations (AF/XO) on the AFC, he suddenly gave an impassioned, yet unrehearsed, speech, unanticipated by his staff, to the AFC about his vision for space. He told the AFC members to "... get out of your in boxes . . . the Air Force needs to take control . . . and envision a Space Command . . . we need to look beyond."⁴³ General O'Malley's concern was not for a separate space service, but rather, he anticipated the established services fighting for controlling the future of space in the Department of Defense (DoD). Although the DoD had been involved in space throughout the 20th century, he wanted the Air Force to be the lead agency as new space avenues availed for the 21st century.

After the AFC meeting Maj Gen Perry Smith, who attended the meeting and heard this speech said, "Boss, I didn't know you felt this strongly about space." General O'Malley replied, "I didn't know it either, but once I got rolling it went."⁴⁴ It was a convincing speech; the AFC agreed with his position.

He also had convincing job knowledge and effective communication skills when dealing with Congress; he excelled in this. A senior Air Force civilian noted that General O'Malley was not "temporary" help, referring to a belief that many senior military officers don't make the effort required to understand Congressional relations. General O'Malley had credibility and a great ability to work with Congress.

One of his effective tools in Washington was his ability to build powerful networks, both in the Pentagon and in Congress. He especially maintained close relationships with congressmen from his home state, Pennsylvania. Some crucial votes were won on key programs during his tour in Washington because he maintained a network on Capitol Hill. He testified to Congressional

⁴²The Air Force Council (AFC) is the Air Force's senior corporate decisionmaking body. The AFC is chaired by the Air Force vice chief of staff and has representatives from senior Air Staff offices. Policy options and recommendations from the AFC are then given to the Air Force Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force.

⁴³Interview discussions on Dec 3, 1993. with Maj Gen Perry Smith. USAF. retired.

⁴⁴Ibid.

committees on sensitive and classified programs. For example, his knowledge of the Tactical Intelligence and Related Activities (TIARA) programs made him one of the leading spokesmen for the Air Force. General O'Malley was politically astute and understood the importance of good relations.⁴⁵

General O'Malley's understanding of how Washington works was described by Gen Robert Bazley, who served with him on the Air Staff. Lieutenant General Bazley was the new Air Force Inspector General and had served overseas for several years before returning to the Pentagon. Lieutenant General Bazley asked, "Say, I've been out of town for quite a few years; who are the power brokers in D.C. today?" After a short pause, and after listening to some of the other generals in the dining room, General O'Malley replied, "It's the Congressional staffers." The other generals in the chief's dining room then agreed. General O'Malley understood and accepted the importance of dealing with Congress to get what he believed the country needed.⁴⁶

In addition to his political astuteness, General O'Malley understood the importance of the Soviet Union to the military buildup of the early 1980s. He shared his views with those who worked with him: "Like poker, we needed to raise the stakes to push the Soviet Union out. In other words, we'd have to build up in order to build down."⁴⁷

General O'Malley spoke again of that build-up when discussing the US relationship vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in testimony he delivered to the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel:

The Air Force is confronted with a formidable Soviet challenge. We face the foreboding prospect of significant strategic inferiority unless we promptly undertake the necessary actions to strengthen our nuclear forces and restore the strategic balance. Correcting the strategic balance is fundamental to our security. We must proceed with an overall strategic modernization program that improves the survivability of our strategic forces, restores our strength relative to that of the Soviet Union, and assures that the Kremlin is denied

⁴⁵Interview discussions on Nov 2, 1993, with Mr Joseph Pople, Senior Executive Service, retired; and on Dec 28, 1993, with Gen Charles Gabriel, USAF, retired.

⁴⁶Interview discussions on Nov 4, 1993, with Gen Robert Bazley, USAF, retired.

⁴⁷Interview discussions on Nov 2, 1993, with Lt Gen Robert Kelley, USAF, retired.

any prospect of success in nuclear conflict. The broad strategic improvement program set forth by President Reagan last fall is designed to fulfill these objectives. We must proceed with it quickly; we must proceed with it resolutely.⁴⁸

He spoke again of his concern over Soviet power when addressing the Air Force ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) at Notre Dame:

The unprecedented growth in Soviet combat power concerns me, and it should concern you. This nation cannot and will not proceed down the primrose path that leads to appeasement and military unpreparedness. We have to see the Soviet threat for what it is -- a serious challenge that must be met with the same resolve and courage Americans have shown in the past.⁴⁹

Another part of his job knowledge was his ability to learn issues quickly. This involved hard work. General O'Malley was known for doing his homework; he gathered facts, built his case, synthesized ideas, and spoke plainly.⁵⁰

In preparing himself, he often went directly to the source for pertinent information. This became apparent when he discussed the Trident submarine with a senior Navy official during a joint discussion with his counterparts in the other services. General O'Malley went to the chief engineer on the Trident project to gather facts and figures; the Navy official wasn't as well prepared. General O'Malley learned that nobody from the Navy had discussed the issue with the engineer; consequently, he won the argument on the Trident issue. His ability to gather facts from numerous sources was a trait many remember, but he also was remembered for the powerful team he built.

⁴⁸Testimony by Lt Gen Jerome F. O'Malley, DCS, Plans and Operations, USAF, before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, February 26, 1982. Aerospace Speech, USAF, Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁹Remarks prepared for delivery by Gen Jerome F. O'Malley, vice chief of staff, USAF, at the Notre Dame ROTC commissioning ceremony, South Bend, Indiana, May 14, 1983. Aerospace Speech, USAF, Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁰Interview discussions on Dec 28, 1993, with Gen Charles Gabriel, USAF, retired.

With an effective team, General O'Malley allowed the entire organization to grow at a faster rate. He accelerated team growth by letting the members be innovative and run as hard as they could. Senior Air Force leaders who served with him say that Jerry O'Malley was great as an individual, but he was even greater leading a team; the synergistic effect was in place and he kept them happy as a team. One way he built team confidence was to delegate authority and to trust action officers. However, in another example provided by one of his close team members, General O'Malley did not want to buffet all of his subordinates' fights.

After battling some issues in Air Force operations, General O'Malley reminded a junior general to get the things in the proper in box. General O'Malley was trying to stress the importance of keeping actions and debates at the proper level and not to send everything up to the boss for him to fight. Furthermore, General O'Malley asked this junior general, "Are you trying to hold my coat?" (in reference to a trainer holding the boxer's coat while the boxer fought.) The listening general seemed puzzled, but the analogy suddenly got clearer when General O'Malley asked, "Will I get my nose bloody?"⁵¹

This example of supporting the team was important. General O'Malley was telling his staff to save him for the really tough fights, not simply sending the boss out if the battle will be tough.

On the purely operational side of his knowledge, many claim General O'Malley was second to none. In the Pacific Command, for instance, he was instrumental in the introduction of the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Air Campaign Plan to the other tactical air forces, although this initiative was well under way before his arrival. General O'Malley briefed the concept to a CORONA⁵² meeting, and it was well-received. Additionally, with a strong reconnaissance background, General O'Malley knew the importance of near-real-time intelligence for the operators in the field. Therefore, he wanted to keep the chief operations and intelligence officers

⁵¹Interview discussions on Dec 3, 1993, with Maj Gen Perry Smith, USAF, retired.

⁵²Air Force CORONA meetings consist of the four-star generals, three-star commanding generals, the Secretary of the Air Force and sometimes key senior civilians. Important policy issues and decisions are reviewed during the two or three CORONA meetings held each year.

in the same office at the PACAF headquarters. Some claim his early work on intelligence still had positive effects in the Persian Gulf War.⁵³

After strong job knowledge, General O'Malley stressed sensitivity.

★ Sensitivity Toward Others

Many who worked directly for General O'Malley say this was the trait he best exemplified. He did not make enemies, but rather reinforced positive behavior. When he hired Sergeant Willie Diggins, his first house aide, to assist with official entertaining at their quarters on Bolling Air Force Base, Lieutenant General O'Malley referred to him as "Can Do Diggins." The general publicly praised Sgt Diggins by saying "anything that can be done, he [Willie] can do."⁵⁴

He was known for encouraging people. Consequently, team members felt badly if they believed they had failed him. The team was inspired, not frightened. He pulled the team for results rather than pushing them. In talking about principles with his oldest son, General O'Malley told Jimmy it was significant to make everybody feel important. "You could make their year if you asked them what they thought about something."⁵⁵ His key was to treat people with respect, and he wanted the environment to be one of work combined with fun.

Having fun while accomplishing the mission was important to General O'Malley. He believed that senior officers needed to have fun.⁵⁶ It was like a trickle down theory: if the commanders are having fun, the troops will too. The story has been told that General O'Malley, after visiting several Tactical Air Command (TAC) bases as the new commander, stopped at the home base of one of TAC's numbered air forces. Upon greeting the official party, General O'Malley asked the commander, "Why aren't the people in your command having any fun?"

⁵³Interview discussions on Nov 9, 1993, with Lt Gen Thomas McInerney and a November 8, 1993, background paper entitled, "Gen O'Malley's Challenges in the Pacific," from Dr Tim Keck, HQ PACAF historian. Gen O'Malley's aim was to make intelligence information available to those who needed it as soon as possible. Lag time was a source of frustration. His experience in the SR-71 and other TIARA programs increased his sensitivity to the need for closer cooperation between operations and intelligence.

⁵⁴Telephone interview on Feb 17, 1994, with TSgt Willie Diggins, USAF, retired.

⁵⁵Telephone interview on Mar 8, 1994, with Capt Jimmy O'Malley, USAF.

⁵⁶Interview discussions on Feb 14, 1994, with Lt Gen Billy Boles, USAF.

General O'Malley's "troops" followed him because he was sincerely interested in their futures.⁵⁷ As a commander, he was well-liked and effective. His sensitivity shone through in his speech and his actions. A senior retired leader said, "If they would've given him a fifth star, it would say 'people' on it."⁵⁸

One of the best examples of sensitivity came during his transitions to major Air Force commands at both the Pacific Air Forces and Tactical Air Command. During both assumptions of command, General O'Malley stated that he wanted to "make a good command even better." He was sensitive to the outgoing commanders and used a velvet glove in the transition. His staffs called them seamless transitions despite significant personality differences and leadership styles between the outgoing and incoming commanders. During these changes of command, he praised the incumbents for what they did and welcomed them back to their old commands. General O'Malley did not want to shut doors on their feelings or expertise. This same warmth was especially evident in one-on-one relationships.⁵⁹

Another example of his caring and sensitivity occurred shortly before the General's fatal accident. General O'Malley offered his aide, Captain Ed Whalen, the opportunity to stay home and spend time with his family rather than accompany him on a short trip to his hometown area in Pennsylvania for a speech to a Boy Scout gathering. The aide had just finished a trip with General and Mrs O'Malley to Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, on the same day, April 20, 1985. Knowing the sincerity of the overture, the aide stayed home at Langley Air Force Base, and thus his life was spared.⁶⁰

⁵⁷TSgt Diggins further emphasized how General O'Malley shared Air Force current events with him because as an aide he was "out of the loop." General O'Malley believed it was important that TSgt Diggins know the latest happenings, so he wasn't penalized for his job as an aide.

⁵⁸Telephone interview on Dec 29, 1993, with Maj Gen Henry Meade, USAF, retired.

⁵⁹Interview discussions with Lt Gens Robert Kelley (Nov 2, 1993) and Charles Cunningham, Jr, (Nov 2, 1993) both USAF, retired, and Maj Gen John Jumper, USAF, (Nov 22, 1993).

⁶⁰Interview discussions on Nov 9, 1993, with Lieutenant Col Ed Whalen, USAF. All five people aboard the T-39 aircraft were killed: Gen and Mrs O'Malley and three crew members.

Another example of the general's sensitivity was that he not only remember people's names, but more importantly, could discuss family details. His sensitivity and genuine concern showed in his common, daily actions with people.

He showed sensitivity in setting office hours. He knew that if the four-star worked late, office chiefs and action officers would work later. Therefore, as commander of a major command he tried to leave before 5 p.m. This concern also applied to Saturday work.

During one of his initial staff meetings as the commander of TAC, General O'Malley ended Saturday work. He also said to his staff, "Have three priorities: (1) to yourself; (2) to your family; and (3) to the Air Force. Unless the first two are in order, the third one can't be." This policy change for Saturday work and his philosophy on priorities were immediately welcomed.⁶¹

The importance of the family was not an O'Malley invention. He probably was influenced by his own family experience as well as by other Air Force leaders, particularly Gen Russell Dougherty, who as Commander of Strategic Air Command (SAC), was reputed to have said, "There's no regulation in the Air Force that says the boss has to be an S.O.B." Many associates agree that General O'Malley's leadership style was like General Dougherty's. The similarity in sensitivity to people was one of those traits that especially showed in General O'Malley.

Friends and official visitors were very important to General O'Malley. He asked his aide at PACAF, Capt Bryant Dougherty, to keep a supply of birthday cards for him to send to friends. Similarly, to show caring toward official visitors to the command, he asked the protocol staff to take care to match welcome gifts to the visitors. This included matching their interests or, in Hawaii, it often meant giving an aloha shirt as the welcome gift, thus readying the guest for the "aloha attire" usually required for the evening functions.

After official parties it was General O'Malley's habit to recognize the people behind the scenes who made the event successful. When the function was over, he asked the people in

⁶¹The previous commander's rule was that the HQ TAC staff (deputy chiefs or their assistants) worked half days on Saturdays. Interview discussions on Feb 14, 1994, with Lt Gen Billy Boles, USAF.

protocol or those assigned to his personal staff to step into the dining room to be recognized by the guests; it was his way of saying thanks to his great team.⁶²

When General O'Malley had his first meeting with the vice commander of TAC he made an important non-verbal statement: He went to the vice commander's office instead of asking the lieutenant general to come to the commander's office showing he didn't think he was too important to make the short walk.⁶³

He was also sensitive to those who were outside the Air Force family. For instance, a civilian business friend and car dealer near Beale Air Force Base, California, was dying of throat cancer. This man had been extremely helpful in community-base relations, so, General O'Malley nominated him for a high civilian award and presented it to him before cancer took the man's life. According to witnesses, it was an emotional, touching presentation.⁶⁴

His sensitivity was the natural linchpin in his unique style. To enhance his sensitivity he firmly believed in being yourself -- in both your personal and professional lives.

★ Be Yourself

As General O'Malley shared with the National War College class:

Some of the worst examples of failure I know in my life are guys, who for some reason get along to lieutenant colonel by being themselves; then perhaps because they've served under somebody or perhaps they've started reading about someone, they decide to become like someone else...and emulate a Curt LeMay or a Bob Dixon...they become worse examples of failure. There's nothing wrong with LeMay or Dixon, but don't change your leadership style. But what I'd like to leave with you today is don't embellish your healthy characteristics. Be yourself. Just because you put a star, or two or four stars on, you should not try to be somebody else.⁶⁵

⁶²Interview discussions on Nov 3, 1993, with Col Paul Kopycinski, USAF, retired.

⁶³Interview discussions on Nov 2, 1993, with Lt Gen Robert Kelley, USAF, retired.

⁶⁴Interview discussions on Nov 3, 1993, with Maj Gen John Storrie, USAF, retired.

⁶⁵NWC speech, Spring 1985 (note 21).

Additionally, he told the PACAF Chiefs' Group:

Take time away from your daily tasks long enough to do some thinking about leadership and about yourself. Consider your attributes and your characteristics and your faults and your high points. You should never try to imitate another leader. He or she has a style that may emphasize certain characteristics and those characteristics are wonderful for that person, but they could be disastrous for you. The worst leaders I've met in my 30 years of service were those who having reached some level like tech [technical] sergeant, or staff sergeant, or colonel going to general deciding that they are going to emulate another person's leadership style. I would urge you as you lead people to apply the characteristics of leadership to your unique style; to your personality; to your strengths; and to your weaknesses.⁶⁶

He put this into action and wasn't afraid to be himself, according to one of his executive secretaries:

He didn't hesitate to ask for my opinion on administrative/social items, he took time every now and then to engage in small talk -- in other words, he treated me like a friend -- and he let me know by word or gesture how much he appreciated my work. He had a wonderful sense of humor and was not at all put out by jokes at his expense. He didn't mind showing his human side, like the time close to the end of his tour here when we were packing him out. One day I was standing by the file cabinet and as he passed on his way home, he paused just for a second, took my hand and gave it a slight squeeze. He didn't have to say anything -- I just knew by the touch and the way he looked that he was sad at having to leave Hawaii.⁶⁷

Along with his focus on being yourself, General O'Malley was seen as one of the greatest communicators and that was his next principle.

★ Communicate

General O'Malley believed deeply in the value of communication, both personally and professionally, as seen in two speeches:

⁶⁶Chiefs' Group speech (note 19).

⁶⁷Memo to the author, dated 12 January 1994, from Mrs May Deponte, Executive/Personal secretary to Gen O'Malley at HQ PACAF.

More marriages break down because there is no communication. Countries have wars because there's none; and people don't lead because they can't communicate. You must be able to clearly articulate your mission and your near-term objectives into specific things to be gained by the people who work for you. Communications, as far as I'm concerned in a leader, is about 70 percent listening.⁶⁸

At the large organizational level (like a wing) you should do about 70 percent listening. Listening to everyone: staff, pilots, people on the flight line, major command experts...listen.⁶⁹

If you're not listening more than you're talking, then you are not communicating. Someone said as long as your mouth is moving, you won't hear a thing. I agree.⁷⁰

And he did listen. People often stopped by his office without the usual hesitation. He didn't want to be apart from people. This general didn't want buffers like some leaders need for comfort. As described by Lt Gen Al Edmonds, General O'Malley "gave you the spotlight when he talked to you."⁷¹

His communication also came in the form of clear guidance. In chairing the Air Force Council, for instance, members had no doubts about his direction. Troops at all levels knew what he wanted done. Meetings were short and business-like, but spiced with humor. To support his short meetings, numbers of briefing slides were limited.

Upon his arrival at Headquarters TAC, an eager action officer was carrying a large stack of briefing charts down the hall and encountered General O'Malley. The action officer said, "These charts are to brief you, sir." General O'Malley replied with a smile, "Oh, no they're not. Come back when you have five or six pertinent charts." O'Malley was known to have said, "you

⁶⁸Chiefs' Group speech (note 19).

⁶⁹NWC speech (note 21).

⁷⁰Chiefs' Group speech (note 19).

⁷¹Interview discussions on Feb 16, 1994. with Lt Gen Albert Edmonds. USAF.

could cover the Bible in 20 slides."⁷² General O'Malley didn't pontificate to his staff; he was known as a man of action, not as a man of rhetoric.

His personal communication skills paid dividends. Senior people noted he had an unstoppable network within military channels. He cultivated his networks by including his established teams and listening to those around him. Then, if he heard something that interested him, he would pursue it further. His successful style of communication included being open about everything. He did not have hidden agendas. While listening, he looked for people's strong points and capitalized on them. Therefore, he could get the most out of them.⁷³

During one of the initial briefings by the PACAF comptroller staff, General O'Malley, as the new commander, was asked if he'd like a routinely updated reference book or computer program with the information provided on the briefing charts. General O'Malley grinned and replied to the comptroller, "No, you remember these facts and figures, and I'll remember your phone number." This was one of many examples of his strong preference for communicating with people rather than machines or paperwork.⁷⁴

Supporting his belief in communication, General O'Malley encouraged his staffs to get out to the bases to find out what's really happening. He wanted the people who fed him information and provided advice to be familiar with field operations. His senior enlisted advisor at PACAF remembers General O'Malley as the leader who didn't dictate guidance, but rather had the talent for knowing the right questions to ask. His questions would lead subordinates to solutions which made them feel like they were solving the problem.⁷⁵

On one occasion, a Pentagon tour group was stopped at a model-airplane showcase. General O'Malley passed by when somebody asked him a question about the planes in the showcase. He spent 20 minutes talking, rather than just brushing off these strangers. He talked

⁷²Interviews discussions with Lt Gen Billy Boles, USAF, (Feb 14, 1994); Col Michael Reardon, USAFR, retired, (Nov 5, 1993); and telephone interview on Jan 5, 1994, with Col Gerald Von Bargaen, USAF, retired.

⁷³Interview discussions on Nov 2, 1993, with Mr Joseph Poppo, Senior Executive Service, retired; and telephone interview on Jan 5, 1994, with Col Gerald Von Bargaen, USAF, retired.

⁷⁴Telephone interview on Jan 5, 1994, with Col Gerald Von Bargaen, USAF, retired.

⁷⁵Telephone interview on Feb 22, 1994, with Chief Master Sergeant James Hudson, USAF, retired.

about the historical significance of several of the planes, specifically highlighting the SR-71. The group was impressed to have a four-star general give them unscheduled attention.⁷⁶

General O'Malley realized the importance of good communication with the press. He met with editorial boards frequently. His philosophy with the press was to start shooting at them -- by taking the lead on media issues -- before they shot at him. To carry out that theme, General O'Malley worked closely with the public affairs staff to (1) develop a plan, (2) have a mission, (3) carry a theme, (4) control the outcome, and (5) know the defenses out there. He was willing to talk any number of times to reporters to get the Air Force story straight. He understood the importance of the press, and with clear logic, he would help to deliver the message.⁷⁷

He often shared knowledge of sensitive programs with key public affairs people so they would understand the importance of these programs; this led to the Air Force being more responsive to the press, a real breakthrough.

He also worked through "horror story" scenarios with public affairs officers, such as the Air Force response were a B-1 to crash. In these scenarios he emphasized positive control of negative situations. In cases of aircraft accidents it was important to say how the escape systems worked, and to show what we learned from accidents. He believed that it was important to get ahead of bad news.⁷⁸

Action officers would sometimes bring unworkable ideas to General O'Malley. Instead of tossing them out of his office, he'd calmly say, "That's a nice idea, but go back and think about..." General O'Malley explained to his staff, "it's my job to separate the good ideas from the bad ones. That's what I get paid to do. If I ridicule new ideas, the staff will stop bringing me fresh ideas."⁷⁹

Finally, his communication skills allowed him to give creative compliments, as explained by Maj Gen Perry Smith:

⁷⁶Interview discussions in Richmond, VA, on Nov 16, 1993, with Brig Gen Michael McRaney, USAF, retired.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Interview discussions on Feb 4, 1994, with Dr Alan Gropman, Col, USAF, retired.

One of the highest compliments I've ever received was given to me by the late General Jerry O'Malley. He told me that the reason he had chosen me to be the Air Force Planner was because the majors and lieutenant colonels in the Plans Directorate had wanted me.⁸⁰

After explaining and giving examples of his five principles for successful leadership -- **integrity, job knowledge, sensitivity toward others, being yourself, and communications** -- it's time to examine how he obtained this wind beneath his wings. His rules for success had many roots. The next chapter will focus on the "propellant" which sustained his rise to the top.

⁸⁰Smith, Perry M., *Taking Charge*, National Defense University Press, July 1992, page 71.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE INGREDIENTS OF HIS SUCCESS

The underlying reasons for General O'Malley's success - childhood experiences, education, his enriched Air Force seasoning, and a supportive wife and family - provide insight into his military success. It appeared that good deals just came easily to Jerry O'Malley. On the contrary, his success had deeper roots. General O'Malley shared his view of success with a personal friend, Major General Henry "Hank" Meade, one-time Air Force chief of chaplains: "Success was at the end of a hard-working rainbow." This chapter focuses on how his successes led to his overarching confidence.

★ Youth

His childhood, as outlined in chapter two, provided a strong foundation. Jerry's dedication to the community, church, and school were evident throughout his days in Pennsylvania.

His father's dying at an early age put young Jerry in a position of responsibility. Rather than dwell on the negative, Jerry transformed his role because of his special respect for his mother, sisters, and aunt. This respect, coupled with dedication and the use of his talents, made a powerful, winning combination. A close childhood friend explained:

Jerry was raised in an environment that properly stressed the important things in life, and he projected that training by the power of his own personality into a condition where even those who might disagree with him knew that they were arguing with a person of great candor and good humor.⁸¹

⁸¹Letter to the author dated January 11, 1994, from Lt Gen Al Casey, USAF, retired.

Mabel O'Malley knew her son had the innate ability to be a shining star. She nurtured, honed, and developed his strengths through love and encouragement. According to his sisters, their mother said, "You can be anything you want to be; this is your time to become anybody you want to be." His mother also fought potential conceit by saying, "That's nice, Jerry, but remember you're not any better than the person sitting next to you."⁸²

Although Jerry wasn't expected to support his family financially, he had jobs. During the summers he worked in a dairy, on a milk route, and was a paperboy. As a teenager he worked at the church bingo games, calling out the winning numbers. The women who played Monday- and Wednesday-night bingo enjoyed "mothering" Jerry. This job played to his gregariousness and charm, for there was social learning going on in addition to the work experience he gained.

His mother enjoyed bingo. Friends and family often gave them rides to the weekly games, or Mabel would call a cab. Family members recall it was her habit to play the Notre Dame fight song on the piano as she waited for a ride to the bingo hall. As an interesting aside, Mabel had a car after her husband died, but one day she hit their porch. That accident caused her to give up her driver's license and, subsequently to sell the car. Family and friends provided transportation.⁸³

Jerry walked several miles to Saint Rose's Catholic School and Church. As a regular acolyte, Jerry knew the route well. He served at Mass before school, and he repeated the trip many times for basketball practice.

The school fostered discipline and reinforced an excellent learning environment. A high school classmate said, "High expectations were impressed by family and the nuns at Saint Rose's. The church was a formidable but reliable and loving place to find one's self, and the focus of the entire region was on people in lieu of material goals or wealth." A sense of community and patriotism were two such focuses for young Jerry.⁸⁴

⁸²Telephone interview on November 14, 1993, with Mrs Ellen O'Malley Kanavy and Mrs Jane O'Malley Quinn, Gen O'Malley's sisters.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Letter to author from Lt Gen Al Casey dated January 11, 1994.

As examples of community service, Jerry was one of the few children in Carbondale selected to put flags on the veterans' graves on Memorial Day and Veterans' Day. Jerry's father had been the American Legion post commander. The townspeople were very proud of their fallen fathers, brothers and sons, and they passed this value onto younger generations. Jimmy O'Malley's funeral was the first military funeral Jerry O'Malley attended. It made a lasting impression.⁸⁵

Jerry had several childhood successes. One was winning the Scranton Area Soap Box Derby as a young teenager. He first entered the soap box competition, a very large event in the area, when he was nine. This attempt was unsuccessful, but the competition motivated him to try again. After winning the area competition in front of a crowd numbering about 15,000, Jerry went on to compete at the national event in Akron, Ohio. He became a hometown hero.⁸⁶

The town had big celebrations with numerous awards to mark his Soap Box Derby victory: Jerry O'Malley Week, Jerry O'Malley Night, and Jerry O'Malley Banquets.⁸⁷ It was during these town celebrations that a friend noted his speaking talent:

His skill at public speaking was evident at age 13 after he won the Scranton Area Soap Box Derby and was called upon to speak to several groups. I recall one evening he addressed the crowd at a professional baseball game in Russel Park, Carbondale. He did so with energy, clarity and none of the self-conscious timidity of most youngsters. I am sure that here, also, he was able to focus on what his listeners were thinking, without worrying about how his image was being enhanced or attacked.⁸⁸

This same community and surrounding area influenced, not only Jerry O'Malley but several others who became noteworthy as well. Jerry was not the only one who benefited from the values instilled by families and institutions of the area. The Lackawanna Valley and the Carbondale community have been known to "emphasize human potential over the acquisition of

⁸⁵Telephone interview with Gen O'Malley's sisters (note 82).

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Letter to author from Lt Gen Al Casey dated January 11, 1994.

material goods."⁸⁹ In addition to General O'Malley, this small area of northeastern Pennsylvania has produced such impressive leaders as Chief US District Judge Richard P. Conaboy, Governor Robert P. Casey, Lieutenant General Aloysius Casey (USAF, retired), US Representative Joseph McDade, and the Reverend Dick McHugh, SJ, a missionary in India.⁹⁰

In a March 1992 St Patrick's Day speech, retired Air Force Lt Gen Aloysius Casey told the Sons of Saint Patrick that the "magnificent process by which the area develops people who are willing, ready and able to assume a productive role in society" comes from "three things: expectations, the Holy Catholic Church and the emphasis on people."⁹¹

In addition to finishing as his class salutatorian, Jerry was a star basketball player.

A big part of Jerry's high school career was his superlative basketball ability. Although only about 5 ft 10 in he was a great set shot and a very fast, tough guard who drove to the basket with great energy. He had two remarkable basketball incidences [sic] both in championship games which I will briefly summarize. He led the team as a junior to contention for the league championship. Then late in the season broke an ankle on a drive.⁹² In the playoff game with St. Rose 1 point down the coach sent him in with a cast on the ankle; Jerry missed a long set shot but they tapped him the rebound and he made the next one to win the game. The next year as a senior he again led the team to the playoff and with three seconds to go he stole the inbound pass and drove to a winning lay-up.⁹³

During his high school years basketball was his "first love". He was on the starting five, took Catholic League Champion awards, and was twice named to the All-Scholastic Basketball Team which honors the five most outstanding players.⁹⁴

⁸⁹*The Tribune*, Scranton, PA, "Focus on People Hallmark of Area," March 18, 1992, page A-3.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²As retold by family members during the Nov 14, 1993, telephone interview. Jerry's broken bone was a result of a kick from a jealous basketball competitor who intentionally kicked Jerry. The competitor allegedly made a derogatory remark to Jerry about his earlier fame in the Soap Box Derby.

⁹³Letter to author dated January 11, 1994, from Lt Gen Aloysius Casey, USAF, retired.

⁹⁴Telephone interview with General O'Malley's sisters (note 82).

Dedication carried over to his friendships. As a lifelong friend shared, Jerry "had a close circle of friends who shared all the activities of high school such as: sports, double dating, and generally having fun." This same friend offered the following insight into this friendship:

There were five of us who were very close friends[,] O'Malley, [Al] Casey, John Serafini, Jerry Conva, and Joe Kelly. An interesting sidelight is that we were all from matriarchal families. Jerry's dad, Jimmy O'Malley, died in [1938] partly due to service connected illness from WWI; my dad, Joseph Casey died in 1934, with a heart condition related to rheumatic fever suffered in the army in WWI [another friend's] dad was killed in action at sea in WWII; [another dad] deserted the family and [the other person's dad] was a doctor who was shot in his office by the disgruntled father of a patient upon whom he had to perform an amputation to save the child's life.⁹⁵

This group reinforced the qualities of lasting friendships: loyalty, trust, companionship, and humor. As symbols of their friendship, each of these five young boys bought a gray, green, and yellow cardigan sweater which they wore frequently to Saint Rose's. In addition to the sweaters' symbolism, it was a nice way to spice up the plain parochial school uniform.⁹⁶

Jerry was popular among his other classmates, as well. Besides basketball, his extracurricular activities included public speaking and debate. Friends recall that the high school girls really liked Jerry; he reciprocated . . . so much for his earlier stated interests in becoming a Catholic priest! The warmth and closeness displayed at the O'Malley house made it a natural gathering place for his many friends. Moreover, in a sign of his popularity, Jerry was the class president during all four years of high school. His leadership was especially evident on a self-initiated senior class project.⁹⁷

⁹⁵Letter to author dated January 11, 1994. from Lt Gen Aloysius Casey, USAF, retired.

⁹⁶Telephone interview with General O'Malley's sisters (note 82).

⁹⁷Ibid. His sisters recall that Jerry would enjoy debating them whenever he visited. They had marathon debates that sometimes lasted all night. It forced his sisters to stay informed and be ready for his return trips and debates.

Jerry was the brain behind a rather unusual (for those days) senior class trip. His salesmanship, charm, and local fame rallied an effort to sell enough senior prom book advertising to pay for a five-day class trip to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.

His years in Carbondale were summarized by a friend with a look-alike-sweater:

Jerry not only responded well to this environment, but due to his own special characteristics, he was a natural leader from his earliest days. He was admirable in every way[:] physical features, keen intellect, and general bright humor. As a result, he was at ease with himself and able to see the world objectively. He had confidence in his own reaction to people and ideas and thus never had to work through personal hang-ups to come to terms with same. Thus his easy, natural manner was genuine and not a false image put on to impress people.

Unlike some attractive people who turn inward in a narcissistic way, Jerry turned outward to everyone associated with him and was instantly able to perceive their feeling as expressed or even when not expressed. It was this special talent which I believe was the secret to his natural leadership. I know it made him an exceptional conversationalist, a polished speaker, and generally fun to be with.⁹⁸

✪ The West Point and USAFA Experiences

Jerry O'Malley left Carbondale behind to attend the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, New York. Al Casey recalls:

I drove Jerry to Governor's Island for the battery of tests and he did well on the humanities, about average on the sciences, but he was one of the best performing athletes to go to Governor's Island that weekend. As a result, West Point called him to report right away and he entered the Class of 1953.⁹⁹

His days at West Point in the "C-2" Company were also successful. Although he was too small for first-string collegiate basketball, he played some varsity ball as the sixth or seventh man

⁹⁸Letter dated January 11, 1994, from Lt Gen Aloysius Casey, USAF, retired.

⁹⁹Ibid.

during his junior and senior years. His peers and upperclassmen recognized Jerry's leadership, and as a senior, he wore cadet officer rank. Classmates recall how Jerry really matured in his last years at West Point; that was when they began to notice his outstanding leadership qualities. They say Jerry was always warm, friendly and interested in people. He did not advance himself by tooting his own horn; Jerry didn't take himself too seriously, but believed in having a balanced educational experience at the academy. He is remembered for working hard at whatever he did.¹⁰⁰

His Saint Rose classmate, Al Casey, attended the US Naval Academy, a year after Jerry entered West Point. They met on the 50-yard line after Army-Navy games during their years as cadets and midshipmen. This meeting was followed by partying in Philadelphia. Their close relationship was "based upon complete confidence in each other through all the trials of boys becoming adults." After receiving education at different service academies, these two friends sought and received Air Force commissions as second lieutenants.¹⁰¹

Jerry didn't forget his Carbondale family during the West Point years. As the family recalls, Mabel wanted to go to work at Saint Rose's Church; however, remembering her commitment to Jimmy about not working, Jerry offered to quit West Point to support his mother. She refused the job because she didn't want Jerry to give up a West Point education.¹⁰²

His days at the new US Air Force Academy (USAFA) offered more growing experiences. As one of the 140 carefully screened air training officers (ATOs) appointed to serve as the upper classmen for the first USAFA classes, First Lieutenant O'Malley offered one challenge to the system: his condition of employment included being married. The new USAFA courted single officers as ATOs; but if they wanted Jerry, he was bringing a bride to the academy. To the cadets, he gained prestige because he fought the pre-established ATO rules and won. However,

¹⁰⁰Interview discussions on Feb 10, 1994, with Brig Gen William Burdeshaw, USA, retired, and Lt Gen Maxwell Noah, USA, retired, both members of the USMA Class of 1953. The "C-2", or Charlie-Two, as it was called had about 65 students, about one-quarter from each class. The cadets were assigned by height; this group contained the shortest cadets.

¹⁰¹Letter from Lt Gen Aloysius Casey, USAF, retired. See note 81.

¹⁰²Telephone interviews with General O'Malley's sisters (note 82).

on this issue he had to win over his fellow ATOs because he had asked for and received a waiver. With his leadership skills and warm personality, Jerry gained the support of the ATOs.¹⁰³

General O'Malley was asked many years later to comment on some of the USAFA training. In the early 1980s, a USAFA superintendent asked General O'Malley, "Why do we still do bayonet training at the USAFA? In all my years as a military officer, I've never had to use that training."

General O'Malley, without hesitation, replied to the superintendent, "From early on cadets need to know we're in the business of killing people." The USAFA curriculum wasn't changed.¹⁰⁴

His cadet experience at West Point coupled with his ATO assignment at the Air Force Academy were important cornerstones for his future. The two military schools gave him the "right stuff" for additional Air Force seasoning and more successes.

✪ Air Force Seasoning

Each assignment offered General O'Malley something new; however, some assignments offered more seasoning than others.

His four-year assignment as the aide to General Hunter Harris was hard and not much fun. Senior officers from that era stated that it was Jerry O'Malley who made Hunter Harris tolerable. Jerry was the moderator between General Harris and others.¹⁰⁵

Other career-shaping highlights occurred in his Strategic Air Command (SAC) days, especially those spent in the SR-71. Although he wasn't in the first SR-71 cadre, he was selected to be the pilot of the first operational mission. As stated earlier, he was a lead-the-fleet kind of man, out front in whatever operational job he had. During those early days of the Cold War many

¹⁰³Interview discussions on Nov 15, 1993, with Gen Michael P. C. Carns, USAF.

¹⁰⁴Interview discussions on Nov 2, 1993, with Lt Gen Robert Kelley, USAF, retired.

¹⁰⁵Interview discussions on Nov 19, 1993, with Gen Russell Dougherty, USAF, retired. and telephone interview on Dec 29, 1993, with Maj Gen Henry Meade, USAF, retired.

recall SAC as a crucible for leadership. Perhaps exposure to that environment also shaped his success.¹⁰⁶

The scars Colonel O'Malley received after the Lavelle raids also aided his growth. His integrity was strengthened during his time as the vice commander of the 432nd TRW in Thailand. He learned the importance of institutional and personal integrity throughout the chain of command.

Just as in his high school days, Jerry O'Malley was comfortable with himself. He knew he was good and capable; he didn't have to manipulate things for himself. Regardless of his rank, he wasn't "checking six," as pilots call it. He didn't look to see who was watching nor was he afraid who was going to get him if things soured. General O'Malley defined command as risk taking. He was in control and was willing to take risks.¹⁰⁷

Some of the risks he took involved both H. Ross Perot, Sr, and H. Ross Perot, Jr. In 1979, while working in the Pentagon's command center, Major General O'Malley was asked by Ross Perot, Sr., to provide a list of airfields between Tehran, Iran, and Turkey. This information was to be used for the rescue of Electronic Data Systems (EDS) employees imprisoned in Tehran. Mr. Perot had not known General O'Malley before, but General O'Malley saw merit in the effort, and knew it would be helpful to Colonel "Bull" Simon, who planned the rescue for the senior Perot. Mr. Perot and the rescued EDS hostages thanked and debriefed their new friend, General O'Malley, after the rescue attempt succeeded. The maps were key, and Mr. Perot was grateful for the help. The men kept a friendly, professional relationship thereafter.¹⁰⁸

In 1982, as vice chief of staff, General O'Malley developed a working relationship with the younger Perot, who wanted to fly a helicopter around the world. After a 30-minute discussion in General O'Malley's office, Ross, Jr, had the Air Force's permission to land at its bases. An Air

¹⁰⁶Interview discussions on Nov 19, 1993, with Gen Russell Dougherty and on Nov 2, 1993, with Lt Gen Charles Cunningham, both USAF, retired.

¹⁰⁷Comments about risk-taking were discussed in an interview on Dec 9, 1993, with Lt Gen Bradley Hosmer, USAF.

¹⁰⁸Telephone interview on February 15, 1994, with H Ross Perot, Sr. As a sign of their friendship, Mr Perot was one of the pall bearers at the O'Malley funeral.

Force action officer worked out the details: Ross, Jr, and his copilot landed at Air Force fields in Iceland, Alaska, and the Philippines without incident. The helicopter is now on display at the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum. General O'Malley was also instrumental in Ross, Jr's, later decision to attend pilot training. Ross, Jr, completed pilot training at Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma, and flew F-4s in the Air Force Reserve. As stated by the younger Perot, and echoed by his father, "General O'Malley had vision, charisma and leadership."¹⁰⁹

General O'Malley didn't worry about his image. His accumulated successes resulted from years of hard work. A former O'Malley supervisor asserts that natural leaders are often lazy; however, Jerry, a natural leader, worked hard anyway,¹¹⁰ and his successes bred confidence.

Other successful military leaders showed an interest in Jerry O'Malley's career. Among them were Gen Russell Dougherty, CINCSAC in the mid-1970s, and Gen Charles Gabriel, Air Force chief of staff in the early 1980s, and General George Brown, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the 1970s. They saw him and liked what he produced: motivated teams and results.

Overall, his Air Force seasoning can be summarized as follows:

- ✪ **He was tested with difficult assignments;**
- ✪ **He trusted his own abilities; and**
- ✪ **He believed in always doing his best.**

If Jerry O'Malley was confident and secure, then the team's efforts reflected the same. He was known to be a consensus builder, but when he needed to be tough, he was.

General O'Malley improved his successful talents with a terrific instinct and great sense of timing. Whether it was timing on the ball courts or the timing of an impromptu speech, he had the ability to do or say the right thing at the right time.¹¹¹ Similarly, Father Meade compared him to a

¹⁰⁹Telephone interview with H Ross Perot, Jr. on February 15, 1994.

¹¹⁰Interview discussions on Nov 30, 1993, with Lt Gen Philip Shutler, USMC. retired.

¹¹¹Interview discussions on Nov 19, 1993, with Gen Russell Dougherty, USAF. retired.

good athletic coach who had the right mix between people and could bring out the best in them.¹¹²

His success was further enhanced by the support of his wife and family.

★ Supportive Wife and Family

The magnetism between Jerry and his wife, Diane, lit up rooms; they didn't compete against each other.¹¹³ Their closeness was observed by a neighbor who saw the O'Malleys strolling hand-in-hand along the river on Langley Air Force Base.¹¹⁴ The O'Malleys were committed to communicating with each other.¹¹⁵ Their daughter remembers that her mother

. . . was really a partner in his success. She was his greatest supporter. He trusted and valued her opinions and ideas. Every evening when Dad came home from work, Mom would create some quiet time for the two of them to go over the day together. They were each interested in the other's day.¹¹⁶

Despite her petite stature, Diane O'Malley was a strong woman in will, personality, and presentation of important issues. Diane was no shrinking violet; Jerry sometimes called her a "hard-headed German."¹¹⁷ Diane was warm, fine, funny, and understanding to be married to Jerry.

General O'Malley explained this understanding when he told this story at USAFA Class of '59's Twenty Fifth Reunion:

By June 1955, the ATOs and the commandant's shop were ready for the arrival of the Class of '59 -- our own training had been completed. General Stillman [the Commandant of Cadets] decided to celebrate, and we had our first dining-in. As I remember, the training was painful -- but nothing like the dining-in. At least five ATOs required hospital treatment.

¹¹²Telephone interview on Dec 29, 1993, with Maj Gen Henry Meade, USAF, retired.

¹¹³Interview discussions on Nov 2, 1993, with Lt Gen Robert Kelley, USAF, retired.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Telephone interview on Jan 27, 1994, with Mrs Shirley (Storrie) Smythe, friend of Mrs O'Malley.

¹¹⁶February 9, 1994, letter from O'Malley daughter, Mrs Peggy O'Malley Neal, to author.

¹¹⁷Telephone interview on Jan 27, 1994, with Mrs Shirley Smythe, close friend of Mrs O'Malley.

Jack Doran and I arrived back at my house where my new bride, Diane O'Malley, greeted us with a less-than-enthusiastic demeanor. First, she wanted to know why my shirt was torn in half. Then, she suggested I put on a new shirt and she would fix some coffee. Later, she was to claim that she found me asleep standing against the hangers in the closet where I must have had some difficulty locating a new shirt.¹¹⁸

An example of Mrs O'Malley's down-to-earth attitude and great sense of humor was shared by a former SAC commander. When Jerry made his second star on the Headquarters SAC staff, Diane and another general's wife, whose husband was also promoted to major general, went to visit Mrs Dougherty. The O'Malleys were known to be great party-goers. So, with fear of having to act more grown up, Diane O'Malley said to the CINC's wife, "With Jerry making a second star, I guess we're going to have to clean up our acts?"

Mrs Dougherty happily said, "Don't clean up your act, just make it bigger."¹¹⁹

As Jerry progressed in rank, Diane jokingly confided with another senior officer's wife about their having to socialize with more senior and important people: "You know there's an advantage to be seated around the dinner table with those much older people; it makes us look so much younger."¹²⁰

Their oldest daughter noted, "...mom's folksy Texan ways put people at ease and helped to make both of them approachable. People enjoyed just being around them."¹²¹ Diane could make people laugh easily. Her earthy, Texas charm won over many educated and impressive people:

At a dinner party one night, Mrs O'Malley was wearing a new kartouche which her husband had just brought back from a recent trip to Egypt. An astronaut seated next to Diane commented about the uniquely shaped necklace and asked if the strange engraving spelled her name. Diane laughingly said, "My name? I thought it said, 'up yours' or something." The ice was broken and the astronaut immediately knew he was in the company of a very funny woman.¹²²

¹¹⁸News Release. USAF, Gen Jerome F. O'Malley's, CINCPACAF, remarks for Air Force Academy Class of '59 25th Reunion. 23 June 1984. USAF Academy, Colorado.

¹¹⁹Interview discussions on Nov 19, 1993, with Gen Russell Dougherty, USAF, retired.

¹²⁰Telephone interview on Jan 27, 1994, with Mrs Shirley Smythe, friend of Mrs O'Malley.

¹²¹Letter to the author from Mrs Peggy O'Malley Neal, dated February 9, 1994.

Jerry and Diane complemented each other. They had both come from disciplined, loving backgrounds, and they genuinely cared about and respected each other. Their honesty, supportiveness, sincerity, and humor spilled into their personal and professional friendships. The O'Malleys were known to be the life of any party. However, they also had a serious side: parenting.¹²³

Raising their four children was an important job to both of them. They had typical parental concerns: instilling values, children finishing college, daughters working in a man's world, and sons who faced teenage hurdles. His youngest son, John, recalls several important lessons about his father's parenting: unconditional love, continuous encouragement to build confidence, and loyalty.¹²⁴ Additionally, here's how one of the O'Malley children described their father:

As a father, my dad was a product of his generation. He was not as involved in the "hands on" parenting of fathers of today. But I saw him as intensely interested in building the character of his children. He was great at listening. Conversations were not of the mundane, but more philosophical in nature. He made me feel important.¹²⁵

When traveling around the world or when shopping with a friend, Diane made her family priorities known: she first wanted to look for items for her grandchild, then for children and husband, and lastly, for herself.¹²⁶

An example of her devotion as a mother and grandmother occurred when her oldest daughter, Peggy, was expecting the second grandchild. As the wife of the new TAC commander, Diane had many responsibilities, but chose to leave Langley for several weeks to be with Peggy and her family. Family came first.

¹²²Telephone interview on Jan 27, 1994, with Mrs Shirley Smythe, friend of the O'Malleys. This same anecdote was mentioned in a telephone discussion with Sharon O'Malley, daughter.

¹²³Telephone interview on Jan 27, 1994, with Mrs Shirley Smythe, friend of the O'Malleys.

¹²⁴Telephone interview on Feb 16, 1994, with Mr John O'Malley.

¹²⁵Letter to the author from Mrs Peggy O'Malley Neal, dated February 9, 1994.

¹²⁶Interview discussions on Nov 3, 1993, with Col Paul Kopycinski, USAF, retired.

Mrs O'Malley was a noted homebody who enjoyed making a comfortable home for her family. One daughter explained their home:

I remember my childhood as a blur of places, always a different home, a new school. The only permanence in my life was my family. Physically our home was always a different place, but I remember it the same; laughter, acceptance, excitement, promise permeating the atmosphere.¹²⁷

The O'Malleys were a team. Diane was a concerned Air Force wife who believed in representing the family and giving a woman's perspective to the commander. She was concerned for the dependents' side of the military: spouse abuse, child care, two-member military couples, and single parents, to name a few. Diane served as eyes and ears for her husband.

Jerry showed his love for Diane in many ways. He enjoyed shopping for her, often selecting favorite crystal pieces as special surprises. His personal staff noted that General O'Malley called Diane two or three times a day and would have lunch with her as often as possible. Jerry looked for ways to include her in his activities. When they went to parties, for example, he would ask his aides, "Where's Diane?...Does she have a drink?...Is she being taken care of?"¹²⁸

General O'Malley showed concern for his family, and expected others to do the same. He loved Diane and treated her like gold. As one aide claims, "having worked for General O'Malley forever put your life in perspective."¹²⁹

The ingredients of his success were varied, but solid. In addition to how he shared his leadership principles and how he obtained them, he left us with several lessons to remember.

¹²⁷Letter from Mrs Peggy O'Malley Neal, dated February 9, 1994.

¹²⁸Interview discussions with Maj Gen John Jumper, USAF, (Nov 22, 1993) and Lieutenant Col Edward Whalen, USAF, (Nov 9, 1993).

¹²⁹Interview discussions on Nov 9, 1993, with Lieutenant Col Edward Whalen, USAF.

CHAPTER FIVE: LESSONS TO REMEMBER

General Jerry O'Malley's leadership principles and ingredients of his success provide many lessons; this chapter reviews additional lessons worth remembering from his life.

★ Trust in People

His trust in people was a cornerstone to his belief in decentralized management. His leadership style and strong confidence allowed him to push responsibility to the lowest level. O'Malley emphasized this lesson to the 1985 National War College audience when he said, "If you can identify the mission with the troops, no matter what the troop does, no matter what service he provides, then the mission is going to be better performed. The troop will take a personal interest in what he or she does." He went on to say this is a lesson the Air Force learns again and again.¹³⁰

He could read and understand people instinctively. General O'Malley confirmed what was key in a job, and he reinforced its importance to the mission. He orchestrated results and actions.

As the new commander of Tactical Air Command (TAC), he immediately trusted his staff and encouraged them to surface new ideas. For example, the commander of the Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team called General O'Malley shortly after he became the new TAC Commander to ask detailed permission on a Thunderbird issue. According to close staff members, General O'Malley told the Thunderbirds commander, "Why are you calling me? You're the commander; do whatever you need to do to get the job done."¹³¹

Another example from his short-lived days at TAC involved trusting a senior staff member who wanted to institutionalize training at all levels. Although the training, such as the TAC Leadership Development Program, had been started by the previous commander, General

¹³⁰NWC speech (note 21).

¹³¹Interview discussions on Nov 22, 1993, with Maj Gen John Jumper, USAF.

O'Malley encouraged his senior leaders to reinforce and codify these programs based on the themes of excellence and quality.

The O'Malley's enjoyed having small, informal dinner parties at their home, frequently for their personal, junior staff. A trademark of the O'Malleys' personal warmth, this interaction signified loyalty and trust.¹³² These informal gatherings were also used as mentoring labs. Simply watching the O'Malleys provided good lessons.

Former subordinates and peers continue to discuss his trust as a leader. General O'Malley gave people maneuvering room to get the job done. He accepted people as trustworthy until they proved otherwise. He let his staff bring things to him by exception instead of micromanaging their activities.¹³³ When he knew he was not the expert, he leaned on those who were. For example, General O'Malley called on two senior experts on the TAC staff to teach him the fighter business because his background was in strategic and reconnaissance aircraft. Likewise, General O'Malley insisted on a policy change to share wing commander lists among TAC, PACAF, and the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) because he trusted people's abilities and wanted to share their talents in similar commands, not just in TAC. This trusting concept rang true except in one isolated instance when he didn't act on his instinctive trust in others.

This instance occurred when General O'Malley as CINCPACAF was co-piloting a VC-135. He was at the aircraft controls when the pilot-in-charge took command of the aircraft away from him. General O'Malley didn't appreciate it. This pilot was told later that he could not fly again with General O'Malley.¹³⁴

Despite this obscure incident, General O'Malley was revered for his trust and belief in people. If people presented new evidence, or if circumstances warranted a different direction, he would reverse or change previous decisions.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³This concept was discussed in several interviews by former subordinates.

¹³⁴Informal discussion between the pilot and the author in 1991-1993. The VC-135 planes are used for official travel by the four-star commanders in the Pacific Command.

❖ Priorities in the Job

Leaders at all levels find it difficult to stay focused on priorities. These include personal and work priorities, and in-box tasks versus long-range strategies. General O'Malley had balance among his priorities.¹³⁵

As mentioned earlier, General O'Malley understood the nation's needs and the Department of Defense and Air Force roles in meeting those needs. When making military decisions, he believed in meeting the needs of, in order:

- ❶ **The Country**
- ❷ **The Department of Defense**
- ❸ **The Air Force**

Examples were seen in his dealings with the joint military structure. Several senior officers stated that General O'Malley understood the importance of jointness before the concept became vogue in the mid-1980s. He wanted all the services to pay for their fair share of joint programs.¹³⁶ He understood the advantages of joint efforts before the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 was passed. He knew he had to look around his service blinders.¹³⁷

In a speech to the Air Force Association's national symposium in January 1984, General O'Malley stated his views on this topic when he discussed modern warfare and jointness:

The wars of the past have been fought over a continuum of time -- pauses and advances that take months and even years to culminate in victory. Tomorrow's war may well be fought in a matter of days. The outcome will be determined, not by firepower, sustainability or sheer numbers alone, but rather on the basis of a coordinated, effective joint war fighting effort that blends together the very best of our component forces.¹³⁸

¹³⁵A previous section on the role of his wife and family depict some of his personal versus work priorities.

¹³⁶Interview discussions on Feb 16, 1994, with Lt Gen Al Edmonds, USAF.

¹³⁷The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 reinforced the importance of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and empowered the Chairman of the JCS. Additionally, this law prescribed that better-trained officers would have joint tours.

¹³⁸Keynote address delivered by Gen Jerome F. O'Malley, commander, TAC, to the Air Force Association national symposium, Orlando, FL, January 17, 1984; "Tactical Air Warfare in Joint Operations," Aerospace Speeches, Statements, Data; Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Public Affairs, Number 85-8, page 5.

He was an early advocate of MC-130 gunships. Although the Air Force initially did not support the aircraft, other services saw its usefulness for special operations. General O'Malley worked on this issue and helped get more MC-130s into the Air Force inventory.

While assigned to the JCS, he nudged the Air Force and its sister services to move beyond their single-service perspectives. During a JCS exercise in Korea, transportation funding was in jeopardy. Transportation money for this exercise was sent to the Air Force's Military Airlift Command (MAC), but the mission needed to be done with sealift capabilities. General O'Malley helped to get the money issues resolved to accomplish the mission. His knowledge of the subject combined with his logic and presentation skills won over the opposition.¹³⁹

✪ Vision and Dedication

General O'Malley was known for his vision and dedication to the Air Force and its people. He understood the purpose of long-range planning. Some claim that few leaders are blessed with real vision, but General O'Malley understood the wisdom of long-range planning. He supported the planning divisions in the Air Staff and recognized their work as productive.¹⁴⁰

The example of re-winging B-52Ds reinforces this view of him. In the early 1980s, B-52Ds needed expensive wing modifications to stay in active service. General O'Malley, on advice of his staff, believed the modifications were too expensive and he recommended retirement of the aircraft even though the replacement B-1s were not yet ready. He took heat from the Commander in chief of Strategic Air Command, but he had elected to take the longer view.¹⁴¹

Lieutenant General Albert Edmonds, now director of communications for the JCS, recalls that General O'Malley led the way for the Air Force's merging of the data automation and communications functions. General O'Malley saw the value of moving data automation away from the comptroller function and into a more operational role. The merger also provided more

¹³⁹Interview discussions on Nov 30, 1993, with Lt Gen Philip Shutler. USMC, retired.

¹⁴⁰Interview discussions on Dec 3, 1993, with Maj Gen Perry Smith. USAF, retired.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

opportunities to improve war-fighting communications and enhance promotion opportunities for people in this enlarged career field.¹⁴²

A prime motivation for his vision was his dedication to the Air Force. He loved the institution and its people; he wanted to put the Air Force and its people first by having something for everybody. During his years as a four-star general, he helped get money for improved housing, dormitories, spare parts, and quality-of-life programs.

Shortly after becoming the TAC commander he had a meeting with his Senior Enlisted Advisor, Chief Master Sergeant Richard P.E. Cook. Chief Cook had several years of experience in this capacity, so General O'Malley recognized this when he said "Rich, your job is to take care of people, and you know how to do that. So, we don't need to spend much time talking. What can I do to help you?"¹⁴³

❖ Head and Heart Appeal

General O'Malley had a keen intellect for problem solving. He was bright but could camouflage it when necessary. As the new CINCPACAF, he explained his view of the Pacific theater to his staff. His explanation was very much the same as his planners' views, but without benefit of prior discussion with the staff.¹⁴⁴

As described by Gen Russell Dougherty, "General O'Malley was not an academic, but he was very smart. He was balanced and smart, but not arrogant; disciplined, but not a robot."¹⁴⁵ In this balance General O'Malley valued two specific qualities: to be objective and to be fair.¹⁴⁶ As further explained by one of his executive secretaries, "He was very intelligent, a quick study; but he could turn it on or off."¹⁴⁷ These qualities became his strengths.

¹⁴²Interview discussions on Feb 16, 1994, with Lt Gen Albert Edmonds, USAF.

¹⁴³Telephone interview on Feb 17, 1994, with CMSgt Richard P.E. Cook, USAF, retired.

¹⁴⁴Interview discussions on Dec 9, 1993, with Lt Gen Bradley Hosmer, USAF.

¹⁴⁵Interview discussions on Nov 19, 1993, with Gen Russell Dougherty, USAF.

¹⁴⁶Telephone interview on Feb 17, 1994, with Mr Tom Larkin, close cousin and confidant of Gen O'Malley.

¹⁴⁷Interview discussions on Feb 14, 1994, with Ms Topsy Taylor, executive secretary to Gen O'Malley during his tours on the Air Staff.

His head appeal was complemented with his heart appeal. He brought out the best in people. This appeal was enhanced with his humor.

As recalled by Brig Gen Michael McRaney, General O'Malley called him from the PACAF headquarters in Honolulu while the east coast was experiencing a blizzard. "How's the weather?" asked O'Malley. McRaney replied with comments about the terrible snow. "Well, it's bad here, too; the papayas are torturing us in the yard. They're falling from the trees in the driveway. Diane almost slipped on them."¹⁴⁸

Also during his tour in Hawaii, he helped to put the sign in Admiral Crowe's yard, "Go Air Force, Beat Navy."¹⁴⁹ His humor was well known and widely enjoyed.

General Skantze shared his comments, and added General O'Malley had these qualities. "A great leader must have warmth to reach out to people and win their loyalty and respect. Especially today, a leader must lead, not push."¹⁵⁰ General O'Malley lived as a leader, not as a pusher.

General O'Malley's flight through life was a crescendo of successes. Military people see leadership principles emphasized in many ways through professional military education, total quality management, and through numerous training techniques; however, General O'Malley is remembered as a truly great leader because he inspired those around him. His charisma and effectiveness taught us so many lessons.

¹⁴⁸Interview discussions on Nov 16, 1993, with Brig Gen Michael McRaney, USAF, retired.

¹⁴⁹Interview discussions on Dec 9, 1993, with Lt Gen Bradley Hosmer, USAF.

¹⁵⁰Interview discussions on Nov 22, 1993, with Gen Lawrence Skantze, USAF, retired.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to examine General O'Malley's leadership and the reasons for his success. As a captain assigned to the Pacific Air Forces headquarters during his command, I often wondered what made him unique. The previous chapters point to the reasons:

- ✪ **Nice people can finish first.**
- ✪ **He led by example.**
- ✪ **His confidence was built on past success.**

Leaders live in glass houses; whether they like it or not, they set examples. General O'Malley was admired because he achieved a balance. His leadership put that balance in focus. Major General Meade said, "If you're a hero to your secretary and to your aide, you're a genuine article, a real gem."¹⁵¹ General O'Malley was such a gem by the testimony of many former subordinates. He was a practical leader who was comfortable with himself and who cared about the country and its people. He had a universal appeal.

Many leaders say that people are our number one concern and then fail to follow through, leading through fear and intimidation. General O'Malley did not do that. His leadership principles of integrity, job knowledge, sensitivity, being yourself, and communicating displayed his concern. Chief Cook had this to say about his former boss, "General O'Malley was honest and straightforward with always the human element understood."¹⁵²

Because of his love for the Air Force, he believed in being loyal. He did not go outside the chain of command to solve internal problems. He treated problems as they came along. He expected difficulties and handled them appropriately, not punishing the bearer of bad news nor dwelling on what should have happened. He was practical in his balance.

¹⁵¹Telephone interview on Dec 29, 1993, with Maj Gen Henry Meade, USAF, retired.

¹⁵²Telephone interview on Feb 17, 1994, with CMSgt Richard P.E. Cook, USAF, retired.

Much of the Air Force grieved when the O'Malleys died. Although it cannot be known, many believed that General O'Malley would have become the next Air Force chief of staff and perhaps even the Chairman of the JCS. Senator Barry Goldwater made the following statement on the Senate floor:

Mr. President, on Saturday evening, April 20, the U.S. Air Force lost one of its foremost leaders in a tragic aircraft accident. Gen. Jerome F. O'Malley, the Commander of Tactical Air Command, his wife, Diane, and three crewmembers lost their lives in the crash of a CT-39 transport aircraft at the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre International Airport in Pennsylvania.

Jerry O'Malley was one of the rising stars in all of the military. At 53 years of age, and already a four-star general, he was, I am certain, destined to command our Air Force and, one day, likely even to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I realize that statement presumes an awful lot, but any one who knew Jerry, and his friends both in and out of the military were legion, would find it difficult to disagree with me.

A 1953 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Jerry rose quickly to the top leadership within the Air Force, serving with great distinction at every level.

Mr. President, it is difficult to assess the depth of the impact General O'Malley's loss will have on our Air Force and our Nation, but my personal loss is profound. In addition to the great admiration and respect I held for General O'Malley as a military professional, he and his wife, Diane, were close personal friends of mine and I will miss them terribly.¹⁵³

Although he was respected, he had flaws. He forgave those who were close to him, perhaps too much. This is not unique to General O'Malley; great captains often support lieutenants' careers for reasons unfathomable by others. It is a small scratch in the armor of a man who knew the importance of forgiveness and trust.

General O'Malley made leadership look simple, but his "natural ability," as some called it, was in fact built on hard work.¹⁵⁴ Throughout his career, General O'Malley was part of the

¹⁵³*Congressional Record -- Senate*, S 4441, April 22, 1985.

¹⁵⁴Interview discussions on Nov 30, 1993, with Lt Gen Philip Shutler, USMC, retired.

solution, not part of the problem. From line pilot to four-star commander, he became indispensable and popular. Colleagues, superiors, and friends still remember that "Jerry did not have a hidden agenda; his agenda was what's good for the country, the DoD and the Air Force...in that order."¹⁵⁵ It was with those priorities that General O'Malley could, and did, work on tough issues with credibility. As he became more senior in rank, much of the job knowledge he gained and used came from building his team. As one four-star contemporary said, "O'Malley was a tough act to follow."¹⁵⁶

General O'Malley's leadership principles are not new, but how he practiced, balanced, and used them made him different, a stand-out, charismatic leader. One can study leadership principles, but, as General O'Malley stressed, people need to be themselves. Sometimes that spells success -- sometimes it doesn't. General O'Malley certainly succeeded with his formula.

His leadership was the result of circumstances, talent and hard work that may never be duplicated exactly, but they can be studied to great benefit. Father Meade eloquently said in the O'Malley eulogy, "Heaven is different today because the O'Malleys have arrived." The Air Force is different today because the O'Malleys were here.

¹⁵⁵This comment was made in several interviews: However, specifically noted by Gen Russell Dougherty, USAF, retired, (Nov 19, 1993); Lt Gen Al Edmonds, USAF, (Feb 16, 1994); and Brig Gen Michael McRaney, USAF, retired, (Nov 16, 1993).

¹⁵⁶Interview discussions on Nov 4, 1993, with Gen Robert Bazley, USAF, retired.