

Remembering Harold Greene

When I heard the news yesterday, on August 5th, 2014, I tried to talk myself out of it. "No, couldn't be Harry. I mean, a million people in the world could be named Harold Greene, anyway." I didn't turn on the news or pick up a paper until today. Then, I saw a copy of the local news at Starbucks, and there was his picture.

It sounds almost obscene, coming from me. Harold Greene was a world famous intellect, leader, diplomat, and soldier. I was a contractor who served at Fort Hood, under the "Good Enough" software integration build back in 2004 - 2006. He was a Colonel, then, stationed at Ft. Monmouth, who was heading up the effort. I was the engineer at Hood that didn't fit in, with no military history, a thin skin, and no real clue about how to navigate a tense, fast-paced work environment. And so, it sounds almost obscene, but I will say it anyway: Colonel Greene was my friend.

Why on earth did Colonel Greene care about some thirty-something, suburban, Texas woman, who hung out with bikers and cowboys and soldiers just for the chance to work in IT? I never got a chance to ask him. But here's the impression he left on me: Colonel Greene thought I could do the job, when everyone else was waiting on me to wash out. Colonel Greene took my enigmatic, "non-military," questions at the log meetings, and said, "How come the only one asking this is GINGER?" (Always shooting a sideways smile.) Then, he made something of them. He listened, and he put me to work. In other words, Colonel Greene was certain that I could do the job I was in, and he wasn't afraid to use his authority to insist upon it. Before I knew it, other senior staff were picking up his monologue, and then, bingo! I was a part of a real work force, like I should have been all along.

This was Harold Greene's singular gift.

I am writing one opinion, from a person who worked with him in a small window of time over 8 years ago; but I challenge you to find another human being on earth, who will not tell the same story. Harold Greene was able to take a group of quarreling, bickering, sullen military engineers, and transform them into a functional team. It wasn't with carrots, it wasn't with sticks. It was with genuine love. Oh, no one calls it that in the Army, but I am not afraid to put the bell on the cat: Harold Greene loved his people, and his people knew it. That's why we would walk through walls for him. We loved him, too.

It is safe for me to say, that I would not be where I am now without having crossed the path of Harold Greene. I still have my commendation from him, for Active Directory Integration testing back in 2006. I still have my coin, from him. I have long since moved on from Army contracting, but if I hadn't worked for Colonel Greene, I could not have broken through the glass ceiling. But, all good things come to an end, and there was a day when Colonel Greene passed through my office building at Fort Hood, and announced that his job there was done. I asked what was next for him. He said, "Well, either, I'm going to the Pentagon, or I'm going fishing. I'll let the Army decide." The Army decided. He was promoted to General soon afterward.

Notes

from Ginger

<http://www.songsofmann.com/notes>

I never knew how far he had ascended in rank, after the mid 2000's, but somehow, he was promoted to Major General, and somehow, he ended up as the Deputy General of Putting Things Back Together in Afghanistan. He died there this week, doing the job that he was put on earth to do: He was taking a bickering group of people, and binding them together, to help them get their jobs done. If only that could have stopped the terrorist, and the bullet, that ended his life. He died, not on a battlefield, but in a training academy, teaching others how to help themselves.

A bright light has gone out, in this world.

I remember a conversation that took place after Harold Greene departed from the job that brought him to Fort Hood. A coworker told me, "You know, that guy has 2 Master's degrees and a Ph.D." I was almost shocked - not that Colonel Greene never impressed me as the genius he was, but because he never advertised it. In fact, I asked him one day what I was supposed to call him, seeing as I was neither a soldier, nor a veteran. He said, "Harry. My name is Harry. OK? Please, call me Harry."

Farewell, Major General, Dr. Harold Greene. Farewell, Harry. Until we meet again, you live in our hearts, as a hero.

Related news about Major General Harold Greene:

- [Army Maj. General Harold Greene killed in Afghanistan - CNN](#)
- [New details emerge about the death of Major General Harold Greene, killed in Afghanistan - Washington Post](#)
- [A father remembers his son - Times Union](#)
- [Maj. Gen. Harold Greene laughed and joked before the Afghan shooting - NBC News](#)