

# GOING OUTSIDE THE WIRE

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Dog Tag, Inc., is an organization that helps veterans and military families build a bridge from military service to private sector employment and a productive civilian life by “going outside the wire.” However, when they talk about going outside the wire, they are also speaking to us because going outside the wire is what we must do to work membership issues such as engagement in and out the chapter, member retention, and new member recruitment. Dog Tag wrote:

*Going “Outside the Wire” takes guts. It’s military jargon for going beyond the relatively safe confines or the support of a base. It takes courage, armor, and the protection of your community.... Going “Outside the Wire” means pushing beyond...[our] comfort zones and redefining ... [ourselves].*

The irony is we are not hunkered down behind barbed wire, revetments, or buildings. Instead, our habits and our affection for the status quo confine us. Too often, we expect unspecified “others” to do the work needed outside the wire of our own comfort zone.

Our military training, experience, and capabilities in leadership, management, and performance should benefit MOWW—if we permit and commit ourselves to applying them. The Marines call doing what’s required to make good things happen [“Chief’s Notes,” Jul-Aug 20], “rushing to the sound of gunfire” [“Chief’s Notes,” Jul-Aug 19]. However, success will elude us if we stay behind the wire.

We don’t need heroic, one-man stands... the lone chapter commander without a robust chapter team of engaged volunteers. Overcoming challenges, being a vibrant

*“If our Companions do not venture out of familiar territory into new events, activities, organizations, and locations to seek new members, they are not going to find younger candidates. It is extremely unlikely that new or younger veterans will simply stumble into one of our monthly meetings. We must go to them.”*

—COL Arthur N. Tulak, Ed.D., USA (Ret); MOWW GSO

organization, and achieving persistent success takes a team of volunteers. In fact, GEN Stanley A. McChrystal, USA (Ret), says it takes a team of teams. [“Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World,” Penguin Publishing Group, NY: NY, 2015.]

We must be an agile, learning organization of volunteers who quickly adapt to enable persistent success and achieve needed results in an uncertain world. Mohammad Haneef Atmar, the current acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, reinforced that point when, as described by McChrystal, he said, “Of course we understand the dangers; we simply have no other choice.”

McChrystal reinforced Atmar’s assessment:

*Most of us would consider it unwise to do something before we are fully prepared; before the equipment is optimally in place and our workers well trained. But, as the reader will discover, that is the situation we found ourselves in. And in researching this book, we discovered that that is the situation leaders and organizations far from any battlefield face every day.*

Poignantly, McChrystal also reminds us:

*There’s a temptation for all of us to blame failures on factors outside our control ... [and find] comfort in “doubling down” on proven processes, regardless of their efficacy.... But feeling comfortable or dodging criticism should not be our measure of success. There’s a likely place in paradise for people who tried hard, but what really matters is succeeding. If that requires you to change, that’s your mission.*

The late Brig Gen Chuck Yeager anticipated those sentiments when he observed, “At the moment of truth, there are either reasons or results.” ★

