

Commandant Sends #14: Message to the Team in honor of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Maj. Gen. Steve Maranian, Commandant 15 January 2021



**MAKE IT A DAY ON,
NOT A DAY OFF**

JANUARY 18, 2021

Volunteer at [MLKDay.gov](https://www.mlkday.gov)

U.S. Army War College Commandant Maj. Gen. Steve Maranian honors Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Let's get beyond talk and let's make equality a reality.

Fifty-five years ago, "Bloody Sunday" became a turning point in the civil rights movement. The assault on more than six hundred marchers crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, helped lead America to pass the Voting Rights Act.

In 2020, Americans took to the streets to bear witness to lingering inequities for African Americans to protest not only policing tactics but equal access to healthcare, education, jobs, and wages. Only time will tell if a heightened awareness and urgency translate into policy, law, and alliances that bring about tangible change.

We have long honored the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for his

persuasive vision. Will we look back years from now, and see that 2020 was a turning point -- turning his dream into a reality for every American?

Dr King's dream was for all Americans to live the American dream. To live their lives free from fear or intimidation. To live their lives with confidence in equal pay for equal work. To live their lives in any neighborhood, and socialize with whomever they choose. To be equally protected under the law, with equal opportunity and equal treatment in the workplace.

As an American Soldier, I've taken an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, and the freedoms and rights it promises. As the Commandant of the United States Army War College, I have a duty -- to guide the preparation and education of senior military leaders who will influence national security matters into the middle of this century. And that preparation demands more than just "academic" education.

We are in this business to guide ethical decision making. We are in this business to be part of the powerful ideals that America represents throughout the world. We are in this business to develop leaders who respect every member of the Armed Forces -- and every member of the American society we serve.

So, we are working to make Present a turning point. The Army has established a People First Task Force. It is overturning norms to revise selection for promotion and command -- removing photos, and adding blind interviews in pursuit of merit-based selections.

At the Army War College, we are also taking action. From listening session and open Q&A sessions; to ensuring guidance to hiring panels to highlight the value of diversity; to decisions about how we use displays to signal what and who we honor; to establishing more thoughtful ways to prioritize equal opportunity and treatment for all.

I believe, to my core, that we are stronger together, and that our strength flows from diversity, equity and inclusion.

We are "all in" for transforming Dr. King's dream and our Founding Fathers words into reality: that all humans are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

It will take all of us -- families, communities, civic organizations, places of business, places of worship, government institutions -- all of us. It will take all of us to make today a turning point for true and lasting equality.

If we do this, we will create a future for which our children and our children's children will honor and thank us; and we will cement the dream that is America!

MG Stephen J. Maranian

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"Strength & Wisdom"

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