

# The Exemplary Leadership of Chief Warrant Officer Five Sharon Swartworth the “Five-Foot-Two Giant”

## WOC Rachel Clark, AG Corps (420T)

Chief Warrant Officer Five (CW5) Sharon Swartworth, a distinguished member of the United States Army epitomized leadership and the Army profession. CW5 Swartworth was the first female CW5 in the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps, and the most highly decorated warrant officer in the Regiment. With a career spanning over two decades, CW5 Swartworth demonstrated exceptional mentorship, leadership, dedication, and a commitment to the Army's mission. Her remarkable career was tragically cut short while visiting 400 JAG troops in Iraq on November 7, 2003. She truly understood her Soldiers and their needs, and led them effectively, all while fostering a positive command climate and ensuring the mission was accomplished. Her unwavering duty and selfless service fostered a culture of trust and mutual respect among not only her subordinates but her peers and seniors alike and left an indelible mark on the Army and JAG Corps.



CW5 Swartworth's selfless service was manifested in her relentless pursuit of excellence throughout her exemplary 26 years of service. Her leadership attributes were deeply rooted in the Army's core values: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. As a Specialist 6 legal clerk in the Army Reserves, Swartworth was eager to become a warrant officer in the JAG Corps. As a true steward of the profession, not only did she develop herself, resulting in achieving the rank of Chief Warrant Officer, but she also inspired purpose, direction, and motivation in all she encountered. She was appointed as a Chief Warrant Officer Two in 1985 where, largely in part due her amazing intellect, she progressed to the esteemed role as a Training, Advising, and Counseling (TAC) Officer where she inspired a vast community of warrant officers. While serving as a TAC Officer at Fort McCoy, Swartworth was widely regarded as the best in her role and ultimately converted to active duty.



CW5 Swartworth served in many positions from Operation Desert Storm, Director of Legal Automation Army Wide Systems, to the Office of the Judge Advocate General Information Technology Department and her dedication was evident, culminating in her position as the Chief Warrant Officer of the JAG Corps from 1999 until her untimely passing. Swartworth's ability to analyze complex situations and make informed decisions facilitated the charter of the former Warrant Officer Leader Development Council, a significant milestone in the development of young warrant officers. Swartworth developed countless warrant officers when she spearheaded the redesign of the Warrant Officer Basic and Advanced courses by incorporating paralegals and attorneys into the courses. CW5 Swartworth was pivotal in the creation of the warrant officer recruiter position within the U.S. Army Recruiting Office, ultimately creating the branch manager position. She accomplished all of this while maintaining impeccable presence, always scoring a 300 on physical fitness tests. She often encouraged and led others to do the same, building their confidence and inspiring their lifelong commitment to the Army and its values. Through her guidance, many have advanced in their careers, reflecting her commitment to the Army and improving the organization.

CW5 Sharon Swartworth was a paragon of leadership and the Army profession. Her leadership attributes, competencies, and characteristics exemplify the best qualities of a military leader. She was not only instrumental in developing training programs that improved proficiency in JAG Soldiers under

her command but also established standards and programs for future generations. Her unwavering commitment to the Army's core values, her exceptional skills in critical thinking, communication and adaptability, and her dedication to excellence, professional development, and ethical conduct have all contributed to her distinguished career.

Swartworth's legacy serves as an inspiration for current and future generations of not only JAG troops, but Army leaders of all ranks, ages, and specialties. Her example highlights the importance of embodying the values and principles of the Army profession, not just in words but in actions. CW5 Swartworth received numerous awards and commendations that reflect not only her achievements but also her impact on the units and personnel she led. As the Army continues to evolve, it will benefit greatly from leaders like CW5 Swartworth, who embodied the very best of what it means to serve with honor and distinction. Her legacy remains an inspiration, motivating us to influence people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission.

*Editor's Note: Warrant Officer Candidate Rachel Clark authored this article during her leadership studies in Warrant Officer Candidate Class 25-03. She will serve as a Talent Acquisitions Technician (420T) upon her graduation from both the Warrant Officer Candidate Course and her Warrant Officer Basic Course. This article was selected by an instructor for publication on the 21st anniversary of CW5 Swartworth's passing near Tikrit, Iraq on November 7, 2003.*

