

"Lead Me, Follow Me, Or Get Out Of My Way." By Mark Charnet



Hello Neighbors. This title quote comes from none other than General George S. Patton who was known for his quotes and determination to win at all costs. "If everyone is thinking alike, someone isn't thinking", is another General Patton saying. Let me quote a few more: "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." "You're never beaten until you admit it." "Always do everything you ask of those you command." "People who are not themselves are nobody." "Prepare for the unknown by studying how others in the past have coped with the unforeseeable and the unpredictable." "If a man has done his best, what else is there?" "You need to overcome the tug of people against you as you reach for high goals." "I don't measure a man's success by how high he climbs, but how

high he bounces when he hits bottom." "A good plan violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan executed next week." And one of my favorites: "Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash. My personal belief is that if you have a 50% chance, take it!"

Can we apply these General George S. Patton philosophies to the battle fields of Retirement and Estate Planning? I would vote an enthusiastic YES! Whether a person is 19 or 92, or somewhere in between, the Patton approach applied to portfolio management may be an interesting discipline. It refers to past performance of others as an indicator of behavior in similar experiences. This might mean to study the historical decisions of Warren Buffet, the world's wealthiest investment advisor, to see how he acted and reacted during specific market cycles and environments and emulate his moves yourself. If everyone is thinking alike and selling-off positions, perhaps it's more follow the leader instead of blazing a new trail or perhaps buying some of the positions they are selling. If I make a bad business or financial decision, I'm not beaten, just advancing in the wrong direc-

tion, which, can easily be corrected. General Patton says, "if you have a 50% chance take it," to me this means; be an investor in the stock market not a saver, as the historical long-term performance of the stock market out-performed other asset classes better than 50% of the time! Give your money to the portfolio managers NOW to manage and give them ample time to get the job done without canceling or swapping funds chasing the highest past performance figures. This statement coincides with General Patton's sayings of, "A good plan violently executed.... and "Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way."

We can create a metaphor between global stock markets and the battlefield of Patton's era, especially during these turbulent economic times. Strategy is involved, risk of loss of supplies, equipment and loss of life. If it were possible, it would be fascinating to see Patton's portfolio, first, to see what percentage was in stocks and second, which stocks they were. Did he command his portfolio the way he commanded his troops. Did he follow the philosophies he espoused above? Wouldn't it be interesting to see what perform-

ance his philosophies, when applied to the stock selection process, generated in total return?

In crafting your battle plan for your portfolio, be sure to have a front line of offense (disposable and discretionary dollars). Calculate acceptable losses. Have multiple plans of attack (value stocks, growth stocks, large cap, mid cap and small cap stocks, domestic and foreign issues too) and a plan for retreat in case the battle goes against you (the ability to move into safer alternatives, perhaps bonds and fixed principal investments). Have reinforcements ready to spring into action when the market is down (ready cash for buying opportunities) and your Medics and MASH units nearby to take on casualties (long-term-care, life liability and health insurance). Finally, have a nuclear deterrent to intimidate the opposition (a quality variable annuity with a living benefit rider that provides principal protection and lifetime income even when the markets are falling?).

Yes, investing in stocks today can very easily be compared to a battle. Even more interesting is some of the nations Patton and his fellow Generals were fighting now represent fabulous growth

stock opportunities for investors such as Russia, Japan and Germany. I wonder what he would say about that?

Interested in comparing portfolio battle plans? Just give me a call for a no obligation appointment and bring in your plan and I'll show you mine - The Trinity Method of Investing®; no enlistment necessary - call today!

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