

McChrystal Group

JOHN VINES BIOGRAPHY

Retired three-star US Army general, experienced coach and mentor, Chief People Officer at McChrystal Group

“In the end, those who follow you willingly do it because they trust you and are inspired by you. They are counting on you to have their backs and to be right.”

- Lieutenant General John R. Vines

John R. Vines is a retired Lieutenant General who is regarded as one of the most influential U.S. military leaders of the past twenty years. An outstanding American soldier, Vines’ lifetime of leadership and service serve as a shining example of how to lead organizations through disruptions and volatile environments.

After an illustrious 35-year career, Vines retired in 2007 after being in continuous command for his last six years of service, including as Commander of the US Army’s XVIII Airborne Corps and of Multi-National Corps – Iraq. Vines now serves as a Chief People Officer at McChrystal Group, co-founded by John’s close colleague of almost 30 years, General Stanley McChrystal. At McChrystal Group, Vines advises, coaches, and mentors senior executives at numerous multi-national companies on leadership, strategy, and team building.

Commanding in combat. During his time in uniform, General Vines served in a succession of command and staff positions worldwide. The embodiment of an Army Ranger, General Vines has served all over the world, commanding paratroopers in combat through three separate conflicts. As a battalion commander in the 82nd Airborne Division, General Vines led a combat parachute assault in Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989, leading the same soldiers in Operation Desert Shield as the first ground combat unit in the Gulf. Soon after 9/11, General Vines led his forces into Afghanistan, where he commanded a combined task force of 10,000 US and coalition soldiers, deployed six reconstruction teams, and worked closely with the President of Afghanistan. He also served as the Senior Defense Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

From January 2005 until January 2006, General Vines served as the joint forces commander of Multi-National Corps Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom, becoming the first general officer to command forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan. During one of the most violent periods of the US presence in Iraq, Vines commanded a coalition force consisting of 178,000 soldiers from 27 nations, and oversaw two elections that ratified the Iraqi constitution and selected the permanent government. Following his retirement in 2007, John was a Department of Defense senior mentor to military commanders prior to deployment to combat zones.

Vines holds a B.S. degree in chemistry from the University of Alabama and an M.A. degree in National Security and Strategy from the Naval War College. His numerous awards and accolades include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal, and the Bronze Star Medal.

Respected leader. During his distinguished Army career, General Vines earned a reputation as one of the Department of Defense's most forward-thinking and insightful leaders. At his retirement ceremony, Alabama Senator Richard Shelby remarked that, "General John Vines represents the epitome of what Army leaders, soldiers, and the country expect from our military officers." Known as the "Soldiers' General," Vines' commitment to his troops was unparalleled and he was immensely respected by his troops - those who served under his command characterize him as both an extraordinary man and visionary leader.

Inspiring speaker. A refreshingly humble speaker, Vines shares with audiences candid lessons from his decades long career of leading large numbers of troops in combat. Vines is renowned for his focus on building personal relationships and ability to gain the respect of those he commanded. An extraordinary leader, Vines advocates for an "eyes on, hands off" approach to leadership. Knowing that leaders rely on relationships and trust, he tells audiences how they can build organizations that empower individuals to make the right decisions quickly, increasing the speed and adaptability of your company.

From his vast experience in planning massive operations involving hundreds of thousands of troops and equipment, Vines knows all too well that disruptions occur in even the most carefully laid plans and shares his lessons on adapting to the environment around you.

In a candid and inspiring presentation that weaves together his experiences leading massive amounts of troops around the world, Vines shares with audiences his personal approach to leadership. Listeners walk away committed to becoming better leaders that can lead through the change and disruption of the 21st century.