

Don Shula visits 1AD

Story and photos by
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BAUMHOLDER, Germany-- Former National Football League head coach and Hall of Fame inductee Don Shula visited with 1st Armored Division Battalion and Company/Battery commanders, as well as division soldiers May 2, in Baumholder. During his visit, he conducted a leadership lecture based on his book, "Everyone's A Coach."

Shula was a head coach in the NFL for 33 years. He spent the first seven seasons with the Baltimore Colts, and the rest of his career with the Miami Dolphins. He coached in six Super Bowls, winning two of them. He was the coach of the undefeated Dolphins in 1972.

"A perfect season had never been done before and has never been done since," said Shula. "That is an accomplishment that I have always been really proud of. When I think about the perfect season and when I think about the U.S. Army and what you are responsible for, you guys have to have a perfect season every year. We just can not ever afford to lose. In football when you lose you can get back up and do it again. We can't afford to lose. We have to train that way and we have to be that much more prepared to win every battle that we are going to be facing."

Brig. Gen. Michael D. Maples, 1st Armored Division's assistant division commander for support, said, "These soldiers in front of you today are going to take everything they have learned about C.O.A.C.H. and they are going to put it into action over the next year as they prepare to do their mission."

Shula compared the roles of a football coach to that of an officer and a noncommissioned officer and how they are responsible for those who work under them.

"Sooner or later all of us are responsible for the actions of others," said Shula. "In a sense, that is what coaching is all about. The General



Don Shula signs autographs for 1st Armored Division soldiers after his lecture at 2nd Brigade in Baumholder, Germany.

knows what coaching is all about. His assistants, the assistant coaches, know what coaching is all about. The troops have to be coached. They have to be led and taught what to do in the situations that they are going to be exposed to."

The majority of his lecture was derived from the acronym COACH (Conviction Driven, Over-learning, Audible Ready, Consistency, Honesty Based) which he based his book on.

"You have to have a vision of what you want to accomplish," said Shula. "My vision has always been a vision of perfection. I want to do everything right. You have to have that vision. Your vision should always be that vision of perfection. If you shoot for perfection, you might attain it but it is all right to settle for excellence."

Shula likened his vision of perfection to marksmanship.

"If you shoot for a target and you miss the target the you miss everything," said Shula. "If you shoot at the bull's eye and hit the bull's eye that is perfection. If you miss the bull's eye but you are still on target, that is

excellence."

Shula compared the concept of being audible ready to what he had heard about the training for seeing-eye dogs. The disobedient and obedient dogs were thrown out of the program. They kept the dogs that did whatever the trainer said unless it did not make sense.

During his lecture Shula stressed the importance of not letting success go to your head.

Shula closed with his presentation on honesty. "You need to hone your skills and practice what you preach. Through the years my pledge to the people that I have been responsible for was that if you give me your best, morning, noon and night in the classroom, on the practice field and on game day, no matter how long we are together, that I am going to give you my best and put you in a position to be the best that you can possibly be and get the most out of your ability. I'm going to be straight with you. I want your respect because respect is much more important than popularity. Too many people get caught up in popularity."