

Remarks as delivered by Adm. Mike Mullen
USNA Commencement
26 May 2006

Well, what a great Navy and Marine Corps day!

Mr. Vice President, Secretary Winter, General Magnus, Admiral Rempt, Distinguished guests, Proud Parents, families and friends, Faculty and staff, Graduates of the Class of 2006.

There's no turning back now. I think it's fair to say that at this point you are pretty much committed.

Let me echo the chorus of congratulations that have been bestowed upon you today.

You've earned it. For four years here along the Severn you have worked hard, studied long, competed gamely.

You did not shrink from responsibility or recoil from duty.

You did not say "let the next person stand and fight" when the twin towers fell and the world changed around you -- around all of us.

When it was your right to walk away, you chose instead to walk toward the dangers and the challenges of this new century.

When it was within your power to stay mute, you instead raised your hand and volunteered to serve.

This institution -- this great school --has prepared you well for that calling.

Today, you raise your hand again to affirm who you are and what we stand for together.

The oath you are about to take comprises without question the most important words you will utter in the service of your nation.

They are not words of allegiance to king or prince or potentate -- but rather to an idea.

The idea of freedom so carefully scrawled out on a wonderfully brown and wrinkled document lying in the lobby of the National Archives just a short drive from here. Our Constitution.

This promise is to bear "true faith" and to "protect and defend" the ideas scratched forth in that document.

Powerful ideas, powerful responsibilities.

Today, the nation entrusts to your hands and your hearts its sons and daughters.

Listen to them, learn from them, mindfully and bravely lead them everyday.

They will never let you down. And they'll never let you fail.

As ensigns in the United States Navy your job is to return this loyalty tenfold. That, too, the promise you are making. That is the charge you must now keep.

Thank you for your service, and thanks as well to your families who supported and encouraged you to reach this day.

“Graduates to be commissioned in the United States Navy, rise”

“All Midshipmen entering the United States Navy please raise your right hand”

“Having been appointed an Ensign in the United States Navy to rank from 26 May 2006, do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter; so help you God?”

{Midshipmen: I DO!}

Congratulations...