

Remarks of the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Yale University NROTC Proclamation
Yale University
New Haven, CT
Thursday, 26 May, 2011

President Levin, thank you for those comments. It is good to be here at Yale, although as a Harvard graduate I am surprised that warning bells and sirens didn't go off when I stepped on campus.

It's good to be here and I'm happy for the formal reestablishment of NROTC at Yale. I am happy to be joined by so many of the faculty and staff of this great university, and by my Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs of the Navy, Juan Garcia, who along with people here have worked diligently and creatively to make sure that today happened. I'd also like to, also as the President did, recognize the officers and recent graduates and midshipmen from the College of Holy Cross, who made the drive from Worcester to recognize their new sister school in their consortium.

I have said that this is a formal re-establishment because in a lot of real ways, Yale has never quit being a strong partner for the military. The Navy blue and Yale blue have always been very close together. Dozens and dozens of veterans and active-duty members are educated here each year, and the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs is one of the most highly recognized leaders in international relations policy in the world. The Navy and Yale relationship is one with a long history. As the President related, in 1917, at the outset of World War I, Yale was the very first university to form a volunteer group of naval aviators, many of whom went on to heroic and distinguished service. A decade

later, in 1926, Yale became one of the first six universities to host a Naval ROTC unit. Yale graduates have fought and died in every one the wars our nation has fought.

The Navy and Connecticut also have a long and storied history. Fifty miles from here, in New London, is the home of the submarine force of the United States Navy, home to our attack submarines that leave out of Connecticut to patrol the waters of the world.

The renewal of this formal relationship on campus will serve to bring a lot of very talented officers who will carry on that tradition of service into the Navy and Marine Corps, and the presence of NROTC will enrich and strengthen both our military and the educational experience of all the students here at Yale. In order to best serve our nation, the military has to be reflective of the nation it serves, and it does not serve our country well if any part of society does not share in the honor of its defense.

The 159 universities and colleges where we have NROTC units today produce an extremely talented group of officers from a variety of different regions, different backgrounds, and different perspectives.

But for decades, the lack of a formal military presence on many of our country's great campuses resulted in too many undergraduates leaving college with little or no contact with anyone who serves. These relationships matter. Our nation's universities produce the country's future political, economic, scientific, and business leaders. The education of leaders is about exposure to new and different ideas, to varied viewpoints, and to the full range of possibilities that are open to someone who graduates from Yale. At a time when only 1 percent of America wears the uniform, interaction with officer

candidates in NROTC may be the only window into military life that many people at Yale will ever get.

And I want to say something about the people who do serve our country. Almost a month ago, I, like everybody here, watched with a great deal of pride as the President announced that we had brought the most wanted terrorist in the world to justice. Those warriors who did that are some of our finest who serve. But I have to tell you, that the level of skill they displayed, the level of dedication, level of courage, is shared by every single person who wears the uniform. Their skill, their dedication, the jobs that they do – often dangerous and usually a long way from home – are something that all of us can take great pride in every single day.

So it's a happy day at Yale – NROTC back at Yale. It's good for the university, good for the Navy, it's good for the Marine Corps, and it's good for the country. Together, we have made a decision to enrich the experience open to Yale's students, make the military better, and our nation stronger. Because with exposure comes understanding, and through understanding comes strength.

Thank you and Godspeed.