

Office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps

United States Naval Academy Graduation

**General James F. Amos
Commandant
United States Marine Corps**

May 29, 2012

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Thanks, Bob... and Bob thanks for your leadership of this great class and all three classes. I look forward to commissioning your son next year as a United States Marine, by the way. Secretary Panetta, Secretary Mabus, thanks for your inspiring remarks on this great day in the lives of all these fine patriots.

Congressman Wittman, Governor O'Malley, it's good to see you again and have you here this morning. Vice Admiral Miller...Micheal...my old running mate from Congress, thank you for your strong leadership as you and your team have shaped the character of these talented young men and women.

Parents, families, friends, staff...thank you for your consistent guidance, your encouragement and your mentorship over the years. Your personal fingerprints are all over the Class of 2012. They sit before us today in large part because of your great faithfulness.

Members of the Class of 1962, we owe you a debt of gratitude for your service and fidelity in ensuring that "Another Link in the Chain" has successfully navigated the shoals during their four years here in Annapolis.

Finally, for the Class of 2012, you are to be commended for your choice to take the high road, the more difficult path. When you chose to attend Annapolis four years ago, you began a journey of service and sacrifice to your Nation and in so doing, you accepted the challenge of serving your country during a time of war. A time when our Nation has seen 11 straight years of combat. It's a journey that's laced with uncertainty, unfathomable challenges and unlimited excitement. Throughout it all, your reward will be the opportunity to lead the treasure of America, its young men and women.

Yesterday as the nation marked another Memorial Day spent in conflict, I was reminded of the character of our Nation and that of its people. I thought about our indomitable spirit as a Nation. From those who sacrificed on that fateful day over 11 years ago, to the nearly 6,500 men and women who have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and to those who have come forward such as yourselves, our Nation's character continues to shine brightly in everything we do. I'm mindful that most of you were in the 6th grade when our nation was attacked on that fateful Tuesday morning. And yet you came. From all across America, you came.

Theodore Roosevelt once said about the importance of character. He said...
"Character is shown in peace no less than in war. As the greatest perfection of armament will not make soldiers out of cowards, so no mental training and no bodily vigor will make a nation great if it lacks the fundamental principles of honesty and moral cleanliness."

Ensigns, Lieutenants, today as you enter the greatest naval force the world has ever known, I challenge you to be leaders of character; men and women of honesty and moral cleanliness...our Sailors and our young Marines deserve no less from you.

As you move into the Fleet and the Operating Forces, know that while we are beginning our transition out of Afghanistan, there will be no shortage of work for our Nation's Navy and Marine Corps Team. The world in which you will serve isn't getting any nicer. Without a doubt, we'll all sail into harm's way together as a team sometime in the not too distant future.

Ensigns to be, you should know that it's my privilege to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Chief of Naval Operations as we congratulate you and wish you fair winds and following seas.

Lieutenants to be...welcome to my Corps! It's now my privilege to commission you as Lieutenants of Marines. Wear my cloth well!

Graduates to be commissioned in the United States Marine Corps, please rise.

Raise your right hand. Having been appointed a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps to rank from 29 May 2012, do you hereby accept such appointment and 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; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of a 2ndLt in the United States Marine Corps, so help you God?

Congratulations, Lieutenants. Semper Fidelis. Take your seats, Lieutenants.