

Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Bob Papp's Address

at the

Coast Guard Academy Graduation

Wednesday May 18, 2011

President Obama
Secretary Napolitano
Admiral Burhoe
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen – and especially parents,
The Corp of Cadets – Class of 2012, 2013, and 2014

And, to the happiest people here – the Class of 2011 –

Good Afternoon Shipmates!

To the Corp of Cadets: As I told you during my leadership address back in January, we are all on a voyage together... Our goal is to graduate you from this great institution and commission you as officers in the United States Coast Guard. I use the word "our" because I want to recognize the many other people who are on this voyage with you... parents, loved ones...Academy faculty and staff...mentors and others...You are the landmarks that have been used to navigate the Class of 2011 to where they stand today!

To the classes of 2012, 2013, and 2014: Today also marks the attainment of a major waypoint for you – all of you are also one step closer to your destination. So congratulations to all of you!

Class of 2011: Today, we celebrate the completion of your Academy Training. You have been found worthy of the traditions of the commissioned officers of the United States Coast Guard, in service to their country and humanity. You are well prepared to play your part in leading the Coast Guardsmen who perform our challenging maritime missions.

Today is a turning point in your life! In just a matter of minutes you will take your oath of office! Taking the oath of office is the act that, as the father of our service Alexander Hamilton said over two centuries ago when talking about our first officers " it will attach them to their duty by a nicer sense of honor."

This sense of honor is reflected in our core values and has been embedded in your training here at the Academy. We hope the Academy will always serve as your anchor...a symbol of strength, firmness, safety and security. But an anchor is of no use to a ship without a chain. If the Academy is our anchor, the officer

corps is our chain. Today, Class of 2011, we add your link to our chain – the chain that is represented by our long blue line.

Here on stage symbolizing this legacy is a member of the great class of 1961 – the 50-year link in your chain – Capt. Robert Eddy USCG, Ret. Today we link your rich individual backgrounds, skills and talents to the Coast Guard Officer Corps...

Always remember that as commissioned officers in the Coast Guard your commitment to honor, respect, and devotion to duty must be second to none. This is an obligation that falls to relatively few men and women – indeed thousands have made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve this opportunity for you – it is a sacred trust passed down, quite literally, from the founders of our great nation to you.

I hope you will find, as I have, that serving in our beloved Coast Guard is so much more than a job – it is a calling. There is no higher honor. I carry the same passion today for our mission, people, and country that I did on the day I was commissioned. I can only wish the same for you... So welcome aboard, welcome to the fleet, welcome to the officer corps. But more importantly welcome to your new role as members of our Coast Guard Family.

This is our chosen profession. This our way. This is what we do. We are Coast Guardsman. We are the men and women of the United States Coast Guard. And, proudly so. Semper Paratus!