

I am told that in your time here, you grew accustomed to looking beyond the next parapet, to anticipate where you wanted to take this corps. You convinced your leaders to give you unprecedented authority in the day-to-day running of the corps. That kind of innovation and initiative are the keys to anticipating the unlikely and preparing for the unfamiliar, to being prepared to overcome the surprises that are almost inevitably going to come.

Perhaps the simplest message about surprise is this one: Surprise is good when the other guy can't deal with it. Let us try never to be that other guy.

Tomorrow, you, the Class of 2001 will become leaders in transforming the Army. General Shinseki has called on each soldier to embrace change, to make the Army of the future lighter and faster. It's a big undertaking, one that will not happen overnight. Fundamental change like that is like turning a supertanker—it can't be done on a dime. To redirect a massive vessel takes planning, patience, and time. But it will build an Army that is able to deal with the unfamiliar and the unexpected.

A century ago, on a peaceful day in 1903, with great foresight, Secretary of war Elihu Root told Douglas MacArthur's graduating class, "Before you leave the Army . . . you will be engaged in another war. It is bound to come, and will come. Prepare your country."

One day, you too will be tested in combat. And if your fail that test, the nation will fail, too.

We are counting on you, all of you. You must prepare yourselves—with the day-to-day choices that you make. And nothing is more important than that other word I'd like you to think about today: courage.

Today, America's lieutenants demonstrate physical courage as they lead combat patrols in Korea on the Demilitarized Zone. In Kuwait, soldiers stand ready to fight on a moment's notice. In Kosovo, young lieutenants have been leading patrols to keep warring ethnic groups in check, always at most one breath away from combat. And in Bosnia, since 1995, the courage of American soldiers has brought an end to a terrible war. Every day, our young soldiers face situations that require tact and diplomacy, but also toughness, discipline and courage.

Courage comes in many forms. Sometimes even more demanding than the physical courage to face danger is the moral courage to do what's right: doing your job the way it's supposed to be done, even if others advo-

cate the easy way; choosing the harder right over the easier wrong, even if you have to take a hit for speaking up for what you think is true.

Moral courage means taking responsibility for the decisions you make, not shifting blame to others if something goes wrong. It's standing alone—when your only company is the knowledge that you did your best; your only comfort that you answered MacArthur's higher call.

On the eve of the great invasion at Normandy, having made the final fateful decision to go ahead in the face of great risk and uncertainty and warnings of bad weather, knowing full well that failure was a real and terrible possibility, General Dwight Eisenhower penciled a short message that he tucked away in his wallet . . . a few words that he planned to read if the invasion failed.

"My decision to attack at this time," he wrote, "was based upon the best information available," he wrote. "The troops, the airmen and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone."

Ike was a great hero, a man of great moral courage with the willingness to shoulder responsibility that is the mark of a great leader.

The Long Gray line has never lacked for courageous leaders. General Barry McCaffrey, class of '64, and General Ric Shinseki, class of '65, both proved their courage in combat in Vietnam, where they suffered horrendous wounds.

It took great moral courage to come back from that experience and decide to stay in an Army that had been shattered by Vietnam. But, by that choice, and the choice of so many like them, were able to rebuild that Army into what it is today: an Army without equal.

Courage comes in all ranks—all shapes and stripes. Look to your left—look down the line to your right—you may well be seeing a hero; you may be looking at another Rocky Versace.

After graduating from West Point in 1959, Rocky grew bored with stateside duty and volunteered for Vietnam where he served with enthusiasm and distinction. In October of 1963, just weeks shy of completing his second tour, he was captured by the Viet Cong.

When Rocky was tortured and left for dead in a three-by-six-foot cage—he sang "God Bless America." When he was dragged from village to village with a rope around his neck, he cursed his captors in English and

French and Vietnamese. His will could not be broken.

A fellow captive recalled that for Rocky, "as a West Point grad, it was duty, honor, country. There was no other way. He was brutally murdered because of it. He valued that one moment of honor more than he would have a lifetime of compromises."

Rocky Versace exemplified honor and courage. Forty years after his death, his life, his determination, his patriotism, and his courage call out for recognition. If Congress agrees, we will answer that call and recommend to President Bush that Captain Rocky Versace, class of 1959, be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Like Rocky, like Generals McCaffrey and Shinseki, you that know your profession is about leadership. To lead soldiers, you must first become one—in body, mind and spirit.

You must know your job, set the example, lead from the front. Most of all you must be a model of moral courage and integrity for your soldiers, the way your role models at West Point were for you.

Yours will not be a life of personal gain, but it is noble work. You will man the walls behind which democracy and freedom flourish. Your presence will reassure our allies and deter the enemies of freedom around the world. Be prepared to be surprised. Have courage. And remember what General Eisenhower said to those American and Allied troops before they were about to land on the beaches of Normandy. "You are about to embark on a great crusade," he told them. "The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty loving people everywhere march with you."

Today, as you, the Class of 2001, go forth on your own crusade, our hopes and prayers go with you. Thank you, God bless the Class of '01, and God bless America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2001

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 148 and 149, I was unavoidably detained, as I was the keynote speaker at my daughter's graduation. Had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on both votes.