

7 JULY 2006 INFANTRY OSUT

GRADUATION SPEECH

LTC RANDOLPH C. WHITE JR.

CDR, 2-58 INFANTRY

27 JULY 2004 – 25 JULY 2006

This is an export copy of the actual text of the speech. I have been overwhelmed and humbled by the huge response of many...civilians, retirees, active and reserve component members...but most importantly - the families and soldiers on the field that day. Some of my other speeches can be found online as well. While this speech was directed to Infantrymen, it can just as well be said to all who serve.

“Love of Country”

LTC Randolph C. White Jr.

Patriot 6

ONE STATION UNIT TRAINING GRADUATION

D CO 2-58 and C CO 1-19 INFANTRY

7 JULY 2006 FORT BENNING, GA

GOOD MORNING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! *THAT WAS PRETTY WEAK LET'S TRY IT AGAIN.....GOOD MORNING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! ~ MUCH BETTER!*
THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR DELTA COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION 58TH INFANTRY REGIMENT; AND CHARLIE COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION 19TH INFANTRY

ON BEHALF OF MG WALTER WOJDAKOWSKI, COMMANDER OF FT BENNING, COL SCOTT HENRY, THE COMMANDER OF THE INFANTRY TRAINING BRIGADE, AND LTC THOMAS BRITTAIN, COMMANDER OF 1-19 INFANTRY; I'D LIKE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY

**TO WELCOME YOU TODAY'S GRADUATION
CEREMONY FOR THE ARMY'S NEWEST
INFANTRYMEN. BEFORE I BEGIN, I'D LIKE TO ASK ALL
OF THE MILITARY VETERANS ONCE AGAIN TO
PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.....LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN, LET'S SHOW OUR GRATITUDE
(APPLAUSE).**

**TAKE A LOOK ON THE PARADE FIELD LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN...TAKE A LONG HARD LOOK. WHAT YOU
SEE STANDING OUT THERE IS REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE NOBLEST STRATA OF OUR SOCIETY. THESE
NEW INFANTRYMEN AND THEIR TRAINERS ARE
AMERICA'S 21ST CENTURY SPARTANS. THEY ARE AN
ELEMENT OF THAT SMALL SEGMENT OF OUR
POPULATION THAT GUARDS THE NATIONAL WALL OF
DEFENSE, AND AS ARROGANT AS THIS WILL SOUND
IT'S WHAT MAKES THEM BETTER THAN THE AVERAGE**

YOUNG MAN. NOT BETTER IN A MATERIAL, SNIDE, OR ARROGANT SORT OF WAY BUT BETTER AS IT RELATES TO DOING SOMETHING VERSUS HANGING OUT IN A COFFEE SHOP TALKING AND CRITICIZING. ANYONE CAN TALK ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN A GIVEN MOMENT -- BUT MOST WON'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. YOU SEE IT EVERYDAY ON YOUR TELEVISIONS. ALL SORTS OF SO CALLED EXPERTS - WITH GREAT SOUNDING TITLES, AND ARTICLES PUBLISHED --- THAT ARE ALWAYS READY TO GIVE ADVICE...BUT NEVER READY TO PICK UP A RIFLE...RUCK UP... AND CLOSE WITH THE ENEMY. FOR MY MONEY THERE ARE 2 KINDS OF MEN THAT WALK THE EARTH...MEN OF ACTION AND ALL OTHERS. WHAT STANDS BEFORE YOU ARE MEN OF ACTION. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT A RANDOM HAPHAZARD SORT OF ACTION...I'M TALKING ABOUT

A DELIBERATE, MEASURED --- AND WHEN REQUIRED INTENSELY FOCUSED ACTION. TO BE SITTING IN THE SAFETY OF YOUR HOME SEVERAL YEARS INTO A WAR...SUBJECTED TO THE 24/7 MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE WAR AND IT'S BRUTALITY...AND THEN DECIDE TO GO AND SIGN UP FOR THE ARMY INFANTRY SAYS AN AWFUL LOT ABOUT A MAN'S CHARACTER. TO STICK IT OUT...AT A TIME WHEN SO MANY IN OUR SOCIETY LOOK DAILY FOR A REASON TO QUIT, SAYS A GREAT DEAL ABOUT A MAN'S HEART, THE SUPPORT HE GETS FROM HIS FAMILY, AND HIS ABILITY TO SEE A LARGER PICTURE. ANYONE CAN START, BUT NOT EVERYONE HAS THE HEART TO FINISH. NOT ONE INFANTRYMAN STANDING BEFORE REALLY WANTS TO GO INTO HARMS WAY AND RISK IT ALL...BUT THEIR MORAL CLARITY WON'T ALLOW THEM TO SIT BACK AND LET SOMEONE ELSE

PROVIDE THE BLANKET OF FREEDOM THAT WE HERE TODAY CHERISH...AND SO MANY OTHERS TAKE FOR GRANTED.

YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THAT UNIQUE BAND OF BROTHERHOOD THAT IS THE INFANTRY. TODAY, YOUR YOUNG MEN JOIN THAT SAME FRATERNITY AS THOSE THAT STORMED THE BEACHES AT NORMANDY, HUNTED THE ENEMY IN THE A SHAU VALLEY, PARACHUTED INTO PANAMA, BEAT INCREDIBLE ODDS IN THE STREETS OF MOGADISHU SOMALIA, AND CURRENTLY SUBDUE OUR ENEMIES IN BOTH IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN. WHEN POLICY MAKERS FINISH TALKING, WHEN DEBATE HAS CEASED, WHEN NEGOTIATIONS HAVE FAILED AND ORDERS ARE GIVEN ... IT BECOMES THE MISSION OF THE YOUNG MEN BEFORE YOU TO EXECUTE NATIONAL POLICY.

**THESE YOUNG MEN ARE THE SUBSTANCE BEHIND
ANY POLICY UNDERTAKEN BY THIS COUNTRY
DEEMED IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO SEND MEN INTO
HARMS WAY...ABSOLUTE PROOF POSITIVE THAT THE
UNITED STATES MEANS BUSINESS WHEN THEIR
BOOTS HIT THE GROUND.**

**THEIR REASONS FOR ENLISTING IN THE ARMY
ARE VARIED AND OFTEN DEEPLY PERSONAL, BUT
IT'S WHAT MAKES THEM TRULY THE BEST AND THE
BRIGHTEST THAT WE HAVE IN THIS COUNTRY. I
DON'T SAY THAT TO BE NICE...I SAY THAT BECAUSE I
FERVENTLY BELIEVE IT.**

**THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST ARE NOT
NECESSARILY ON CAMPUS OR IN THE CORPORATE
BOARDROOM RIGHT NOW. THE BEST AND THE
BRIGHTEST – ARE YOU OUT THERE ON THE PARADE**

FIELD. MEN ---- DON'T EVER THINK THAT THE KIDS RUNNING AROUND ON SOME UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES PROTESTING, BREAKING THINGS AND WHINING HAVE ANYTHING ON YOU. YOU ARE PRIVILEGED TO HAVE THE ONE ADVANTAGE THAT ALL COVET...YOU WILL KNOW - ABOUT THE GOINGS ON IN IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, DJIBOUTI, THE PHILIPPINES, THE BALKANS AND MANY OTHER PLACES. YOUR HEAD WILL NOT BE FILLED WITH THE EMPTY THEORY OF THOSE WHO --- IN ACTUALITY -- KNOW VERY LITTLE BECAUSE THEY LACK THE INTESTINAL FORTITUDE TO COMMIT TO ANYTHING THAT REQUIRES RISK.... I'M SPEAKING OF THE SNIDE ARROGANT SORT WHO SPEND THE DAY BLAMING AMERICA FOR EVERY WRONG IN THE WORLD BEFORE GOING HOME TO SLEEP AT NIGHT UNDER THAT

**BLANKET OF FREEDOM PROVIDED BY BETTER
MEN...MEN LIKE YOU.**

**I KNOW THAT THESE COMPLIMENTARY WORDS
MAY COME AS A SURPRISE TO SOME OF YOU
BECAUSE WE HAVE TRIED TO BE HARD ON
YOU...HARD BECAUSE WHAT LIES AHEAD WILL BE
TREMENDOUSLY CHALLENGING AND FOR MANY THE
DEFINING CHAPTER OF YOUR LIVES. LIFE AS AN
INFANTRYMEN IS NOT EASY, AND THE COLLECTIVE
GOAL OF THOSE OF US CHARGED WITH YOUR
TRAINING HAS BEEN TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU
UNDERSTAND THAT. YOUR DRILL SERGEANTS...LIKE
MANY SITTING BEHIND ME ON THIS STAGE AND
SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE CROWD, KNOW WHAT
WAITS... AND OUR SACRED DUTY IS TO ENSURE THAT
YOU ARE NOT SURPRISED. THE VAST MAJORITY OF
YOUR DRILL SERGEANTS AND YOUR COMPANY**

**COMMANDERS HAVE BEEN TO THE BATTLEFIELD,
AND THAT CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. THEY HAVE
PUT INTO ACTION MUCH OF WHAT THEY HAVE
TAUGHT YOU. THEY HAVE MOVED UNDER FIRE, THEY
HAVE SEEN THE ENEMY UP CLOSE, AND THEY KNOW
THAT THIS ENDEAVOR IS DEADLY SERIOUS. YOU
WILL, AS THE DRILL SERGEANT ALREADY HAS, HUMP
THE STEEP MOUNTAINS OF AFGHANISTAN WITH A 120
POUND RUCKSACK ON YOUR BACK --- GASPING FOR
BREATH IN THE THIN MOUNTAIN AIR IN PURSUIT OF
THE ENEMY.... QUADRICEP MUSCLES SCREAMING...
BACK ACHING... SLEEP AND REST NOT
FORTHCOMING...YOUR DRILL SERGEANT HAS
FOUGHT IN IRAQ AND HE WALKED...AS YOU WILL
SOON... THE MEAN STREETS OF PLACES LIKE
FALLUJAH OR AR RAMADI CONDUCTING RAIDS OR
THE PHYSICALLY DEMANDING AND MENTALLY**

DRAINING HOUSE TO HOUSE SEARCH FOR THE ENEMY. YOU'LL REACT TO IEDS, AND FIGHT THE ENEMY FROM 10 FEET AWAY - CLOSE COMBAT IN ITS TRUEST FORM - UNDER 60 POUNDS OF EQUIPMENT AND BODY ARMOR IN TEMPERATURES THAT MAKE TODAY SEEM MILD.

(BIG TIME EMPHASIS)* THIS - IS WHY DUTY DEMANDED THAT THE - TRAINING - PRESENT A CHALLENGE. IT'S WHY YOU DID ALL OF THOSE PUSH UPS AND WILL DO THOUSANDS MORE...IT'S WHY YOU RAN ALL OF THE MILES AND WILL RUN MANY MORE...IT'S WHY YOU FIRED HUNDREDS OF ROUNDS - WHY YOU RAN, HIT THE GROUND, AND KEPT GOING - IT'S WHY YOU MARCHED AND MARCHED WITH NO END IN SIGHT - IT'S WHY YOU CAN TAKE THAT RIFLE APART, AND REASSEMBLE IT IN THE DARK - IT'S WHY YOUR PARENTS CAN SEE THE CHANGE IN YOU**

SIMPLY-- BY—THE--- WAY-- YOU-- STAND...AND MOST IMPORTANTLY... IT'S WHY YOU HAVE BEGAN TO APPRECIATE THE BROTHERHOOD AND PURE CAMARADERIE THAT IS GLEANED THROUGH NIGHTS SPENT IN THE MUGGY GEORGIA HEAT NEXT TO YOUR BATTLE BUDDY, FINDING HUMOR IN YOUR PREDICAMENT, SHARING A COLD MRE AND REALIZING THAT YOU'RE FORMING BONDS AT MOMENTS SUCH AS THESE THAT WILL LAST YOUR LIFETIME.

MEN, YOU ARE HEADED TO THE MOST COMPLICATED BATTLEFIELD IN THE HISTORY OF WARFARE. AN ASYMMETRIC "3 BLOCK WAR" IF YOU WILL. YOU WILL ENGAGE IN VICIOUS CLOSE COMBAT ON ONE BLOCK... PROTECT CHILDREN AS THEY ATTEND SCHOOL ON THE NEXT BLOCK... AND RESTORE WATER AND POWER ON THE THIRD...ALL

OF THIS SIMULTANEOUSLY. YOU WILL, ON A DAILY BASIS MAKE LIFE OR DEATH DECISIONS WITH ONLY THE TIME IT TAKES TO BLINK ONE'S EYE TO PROCESS, DECIDE, AND TAKE ACTION.

YOU WILL OFTEN FIND YOURSELVES AS PART MAYOR, DISTRICT CHIEF, POLICE CHIEF, AND ARBITRATOR OF DISAGREEMENTS AMONGST ETHNICITIES AND TRIBES AS VARIED AS OUR 50 STATES. YOU WILL PERSONIFY DAILY, THE EUPHEMISM OF THE "STRATEGIC CORPORAL". A DECISION THAT YOU MAKE UNDER DURESS; WITH LITTLE TIME FOR REFLECTION OR THOUGHT, MAY QUITE LITERALLY IMPACT THE ACTIONS OF POLICY CUSTODIANS IN OUR NATION'S CAPITOL. - - - - - THAT'S NOT HYPE FELLAS...IT'S A FACT. YOU'RE THE LATEST BAND OF BROTHERS MILES AWAY FROM "THE FLAGPOLE" AND MAKING THINGS HAPPEN IN

**THE VERY BEST WAY THAT YOU CAN. THE TECHNO
WANNABEES IN THE CORPORATE WORLD CAN'T
BEGIN TO FATHOM THE VAST RESPONSIBILITY THAT
YOU HAVE ACCEPTED. YOU WILL BE SCRUTINIZED
LIKE NO WARRIORS BEFORE YOU. EXPECTED TO
ERADICATE OUR ENEMIES, PACIFY THE CRITICS, AND
ABIDE BY THE RULES OF LAND WARFARE AS ONLY
WE AND OUR TRUE ALLIES SEEM COMMITTED TO
DOING. YOU'LL HOLD MORE RESPONSIBILITY AND
DO MORE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS THAN MOST
PEOPLE WILL DO IN AN ENTIRE LIFETIME. HIGH
EXPECTATIONS TO BE SURE...BUT YOU WILL
SUCCEED...BECAUSE YOU ARE THE 21ST CENTURY
AMERICAN SPARTAN....SOMETIMES ALONE, BUT
NEVER AFRAID...YOU'LL QUELL ANY STORM AND
ALWAYS RIDE THE THUNDER, YOU'LL BE GREAT**

**DAILY, AND ABSOLUTELY MAGNIFICENT WHEN
FACED WITH ADVERSITY.**

**LET ME SAY 6 FINAL THINGS TO THE
GRADUATING SOLDIERS:**

**#1: I'LL SEE MANY OF YOU IN IRAQ LATER THIS
YEAR...WHEN YOU SEE ME – COME UP, SAY HELLO,
AND LET ME KNOW HOW YOUR DOING.**

**#2: DRAW YOUR ENERGY IN THE DAYS AHEAD FROM
YOUR FAMILY. THOSE THAT ARE HERE TODAY AND
WHO HAVE TRAVELED A LONG WAY TO SEE
YOU...AND WHO IN SOME CASES DID SO UNDER
GREAT FINANCIAL OR PHYSICAL DURESS. WRITE
AND CALL THEM FREQUENTLY...YOUR FAMILY WILL
OFTEN BE YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH IN THE DAYS
AHEAD AND DON'T YOU EVER FORGET IT.**

#3: AS I HAVE SAID TO EACH NEW SOLDIER I HAVE WELCOMED TO THE ARMY ...THIS IS THE LIFE THAT YOU CHOSE". IT'S NOT RISK FREE, NOR IS IT ALWAYS EASY, BUT IN THE HUMBLE OPINION OF THIS PROUD GRUNT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LIFE WORTH LIVING. THERE IS NO MORE NOBLE PROFESSION THAN THE ONE OF WHICH YOU ARE NOW A MEMBER. IT'S A PORTION OF YOUR LIFE SPENT IN THE COLD, HOT, SNOW, OR RAIN.... FACING DANGER DURING WAR AND PEACE WHILE MAKING THE BEST FRIENDS YOU WILL EVER HAVE...GUYS THAT WILL HAVE YOUR BACK NO MATTER WHAT LIFE BRINGS.

#4: DON'T LET THE PESSIMISTIC TELEVISION TALKING HEADS, HIGH BROWED NEWSPAPER WRITERS, HOLLYWOOD IDIOTS, OR ANY OTHER FACTION OF THE "BLAME AMERICA FIRST" CROWD GET YOU DOWN! I'M SPEAKING OF THE LATTE

**BISCOTTI CROWD. THEY ARE SIMPLE BACKGROUND
CHATTER MEN....AND WILL ALWAYS EXISTS ON THE
PERIPHERY OF ANY ENDEAVOR THAT REQUIRES
SELFLESS SERVICE OR LOYALTY. THEY ARE NOT
WORTHY OF YOUR CONCERN... AND TRUTH BE TOLD
– IN THE PIT OF THEIR FICKLE, COWARDLY HEARTS –
THEY WISH THEY COULD BE LIKE YOU. THE
INTESTINAL FORTITUDE THAT IS A PART OF YOUR
FABRIC IS SOMETHING THEY COVET... BUT WILL
NEVER KNOW.**

**#5 I FOR ONE WILL NEVER...EVER... APOLOGIZE FOR
BEING AN AMERICAN AND DON'T YOU EVER FEEL
THAT YOU HAVE TO. WE'RE NOT PERFECT BUT I CAN
THINK ON NO PLACE BETTER. WE DIDN'T BECOME
THE GREAT COUNTRY THAT WE ARE BY
ACCIDENT....WE EARNED IT! ---- AND WHILE WE WERE
AT IT--- WE KEPT AND CONTINUE TO KEEP A LARGE**

**PORTION OF THE WORLD FREE. JUST ASK THE VETS
HERE TODAY. AMERICAN BLOOD AND SACRIFICE IS
THE INDISPUTABLE PART OF THE WORLD EQUATION.
WE KEEP A LARGE PORTION OF THE WORLD FREE,
AND NO MATTER WHAT DISASTER STRIKES:
TSUNAMI'S, FLOODS, EARTHQUAKES...WE'RE THE
ONES THAT SHOW UP TO HELP...AN AMERICAN
AIRCRAFT CARRIER, AMERICAN SOLDIERS,
AMERICAN MARINES, AND EVEN LOCAL AMERICAN
CHURCH GROUPS... MORE PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD
ARE TRYING TO COME TO OUR SHORES THAN ANY
OTHER COUNTRY. WE REMAIN THE BEACON OF
HOPE FOR MANY, AND GOD WILLING IT WILL ALWAYS
BE SO. WE'RE NUMBER 1...DON'T APOLOGIZE FOR
IT – BE DAMN PROUD OF IT!**

**#6: FINALLY: STAND TALL... SUCK IT UP WHEN
THINGS GET HARD AND REMEMBER THAT THEY CAN -**

**AND USUALLY WILL GET HARDER... STAY
AGGRESSIVE... KEEP YOUR WEAPONS CLEAN AND
YOUR BAYONET SHARP..... PARENTS NEVER STOP
WORRYING, SO WRITE AND CALL THEM
OFTEN....NEVER PANIC ---ONCE YOU DO YOU HAVE
LOST..... ALWAYS WATERPROOF YOUR
GEAR...WATCH OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER... REMEMBER
THAT WHEN THINGS LOOK THE WORST - YOU WILL
NEED EACH OTHER THE MOST... REMAIN
STEADY...HYDRATE....DO PT EVERYDAY...KEEP YOUR
HEAD ON A SWIVEL... REMEMBER THAT IT'S ALWAYS
BETTER TO BE THE ONE TO DELIVER THE BLOW...BE
PROUD TO BE CALLED A "GRUNT"AND REMEMBER
THAT YOU ARE THIS COUNTRY'S 21ST CENTURY
SPARTAN... AMERICA IS RELYING ON YOU AS YOU
ASSUME YOUR POST ON THE NATIONAL WALL OF**

DEFENSE. *** *******

**MAY GOD BLESS AND PROTECT EACH AND EVERY
ONE OF YOU...THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**