

**SPEECH GIVEN BY COL JOHN O'SHEA FOR THE RIBBON CUTTING  
AND DEDICATION OF THE TRANSPORTATION OCS EXHIBIT  
27 APRIL 2022 JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS**

THANK YOU. IT IS VERY GOOD TO BE HERE.

ON BEHALF OF OUR OCS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, COLONEL FRANK HARMAN, AND OUR OFFICERS, AND DIRECTORS, I CONGRATULATE YOU ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS EXHIBIT HONORING THE OCS PROGRAM, ITS GRADUATES AND PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO SERVED AS TRANSPORTATION OFFICERS. WE ARE VERY PROUD TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP WITH THIS INITIATIVE.

THE MISSION OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION IS TO SERVE AND HONOR THE OCS PROGRAM AND ITS GRADUATES; FURTHER THE IDEALS AND PROMOTE THE LEGACY OF THE OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL, THE OFFICER CORPS, AND THE US ARMY AND WE CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO FULFILL THAT MISSION.

THE ICONS OF OCS ARE THOSE YOUNG OFFICERS WHO DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCE, COURAGE, VALOR, AND SACRIFICE LEADING SMALL UNITS IN PEACE AND WAR OVER THE LAST 80 YEARS. IT STARTED WHEN GENERAL GEORGE MARSHALL IDENTIFIED THE NEED FOR TOUGH, WELL-TRAINED OFFICERS AND SMALL UNIT LEADERS FOR THE PLATOONS, COMPANIES, TROOPS AND BATTERIES OF WORLD WAR II. HE WAS LOOKING FOR MEN OF CHARACTER AND ABILITY AND HE FOUND THEM: 74 GRADUATES OF THE OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOLS HAVE RECEIVED THE MEDAL OF HONOR, MORE THAN FROM ANY OTHER COMMISSIONING SOURCE. THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HAS RECOGNIZED EACH ONE OF THESE RECEIPIENTS IN THE OCS HALL OF FAME AT WIGLE HALL, ON THE OCS MEMORIAL WALK, AND AT THE NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM ALL AT FORT BENNING.

OVER THE LAST 80 YEARS MORE THAN 500,000 OCS TRAINED LIEUTENANTS HAVE GRADUATED AND LED OUR ARMY'S SOLDIERS. OF THOSE GRADUATES OVER 2900

HAVE BEEN INDUCTED INTO OUR OCS HALL OF FAME SOME OF THOSE ARE HERE TODAY INCLUDING MG DAVE WHALEY, USA (RET), MR BILL RODERICK, SES (RET) AND REPRESENTING HIS FATHER, JAMES HAMMERSLA, IS HIS SON, DAMEN WHO NEVER MET HIS FATHER AS JAMES WAS KILLED IN ACTION WHEN DAMEN WAS 6 MONTHS OLD.

TWENTY-EIGHT OCS HALL OF FAME MEMBERS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE HALL OF FAME. THESE INDIVIDUALS HAVE ATTAINED NATIONAL AND/OR INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR DISTINGUISHED MILITARY SERVICE, PUBLIC SERVICE, BUSINESS LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION LEADERSHIP OR PHILANTHROPY. THIS LIST INCLUDES THOSE WHO ACHIEVED THE RANK OF FOUR-STAR GENERAL, US SENATORS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, CABINET SECRETARIES, US AMBASSADORS, AND THOSE BUSINESS, EDUCATION, AND PHILANTHROPIC LEADERS WHO HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OR THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS FOR THEIR DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE. AMONG THOSE ARE SENATOR BOB DOLE WHO RAN FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CASPER WEINBERGER, GENERAL FRITZ KROESEN THE FIRST FOUR STAR GENERAL OF OUR ASSOCIATION, SECRETARY OF THE ARMY JOHN MARSH, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF GENERAL JOHN SHALIKASHVILI, AND CENTCOM COMMANDER GENERAL TOMMY FRANKS WHO LED THE JOINT AND COMBINED FORCES IN THE INVASIONS OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN. AS THE LIVES OF THESE DISTINGUISHED GRADUATES ATTEST, OCS PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER WHETHER MILITARY OR CIVILIAN.

DURING THE VIET NAM CONFLICT, OCS DEMONSTRATED ITS ABILITY TO COMMISSION SECOND LIEUTENANTS OF CHARACTER AND COMPETENCE TO MEET THE SURGING DEMAND FOR SMALL UNIT LEADERS. ONE OF MY CLASSMATES, BRIAN WALRATH WHO SERVED IN VIET NAM, PENNED A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT OCS MEANT TO HIM, A DESCRIPTION THAT WILL RESONATE WITH ALL OCS

GRADUATES AND PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO SERVED DURING THE VIET NAM ERA. HE BEGAN AS FOLLOWS:

“THE YOUNGSTER SAT BY THE OLD MANS SIDE, FOR A TIME NOT A WORD WAS SAID. THEN HE PEERED UP AT THE WEATHERED FACE AND PONDERED THE GRAYING HEAD. WHEN YOU WERE IN THE ARMY GRAMPS WAS IT DURING WORLD WAR II? I’M NOT THAT OLD LAUGHED GRANDPA THOUGH IT MIGHT SEEM SO TO YOU. THE MEMORIES CAME RUSHING BACK FROM SOME HIDDEN RESERVOIR, OF A NATION TORN ASUNDER BY SOME FAR OFF FOREIGN WAR. STILL, IT SEEMS SO LONG AGO WHEN I WORE MY SUIT OF GREEN HE SAID, AND I KNEW A COMPANY OF MEN THE LIKES I’D NEVER SEEN. DUTY IN THE MILITARY WASN’T WHAT MOST FELLOWS CHOSE. TO BE NUMBERED IN THE RANKS WAS RARER THAN YOU MIGHT SUPPOSE. THE ONES WHO SERVED THE HOMELAND WERE LOOKED DOWN UPON WITH SCRORN. MORE RESPECT WAS SHOWN TO WOODSTOCK THAN TO THOSE IN UNIFORM. NO CHEERING CROWDS WOULD SEND THEM OFF WITH WAVING FLAGS AND BANDS. THE CROWDS WERE CHANTING PROTESTS AND FLAGS BURNED AGAINST THE LAND. NO LONG AND FERVENT LINES FORMED UP OUTSIDE RECRUITING STATIONS. IT WAS NOT THE AGE THAT PUNDITS DUBBED THE GREATEST GENERATION. BUT WHAT TO CALL THIS SHAKESPEARE’S FEW, WHERE TO SEARCH THE DICTIONARY? IF ASKED THEY’D BLUSH AND GRUMBLE, WE WERE JUST ORDINARY. YET THEY HEARD THEIR COUNTRY BECKON WHILE THE ORDINARY SHRANK. THEY ARE AN UNSUNG SORT OF GREATENESS WORTHY OF THE COUNTRY’S THANKS. I’M HONORED TO BE WITH THEM, THIS COMPANY OF MEN. THROUGH HALF A CENTURY I’VE NOT MET THEIR KIND AGAIN. THE BOOKS DON’T COUNT THEM AS GIANTS BUT THEYRE MIGHTY BIG TO ME. AND WHEN I STOOD AMONG THEM, I WAS THE TALLEST I’D EVER BE.”

THANK YOU. MAY GOD BLESS ALL WHO WEAR OR HAVE WORN THE UNIFORM OF OUR NATION.