

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H. CARD, JR.
U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY
MAY 22, 1992
KINGS POINT, NEW YORK

It's an honor for me to stand before you today ... in this historic year for the Academy ... its 50th anniversary year ... and for the Department of Transportation ... its 25th anniversary year.

In 1967, I stood in your shoes ... and you will be shocked to learn just how much things change without really changing at all at this great school ... Admiral Krinsky was Commander Krinsky back then ... and I made many visits to his office. The plebe class introduction seemed tougher back then. Maybe it was because I was a plebe. My memories get fonder every year -- yours will too.

The world has turned over many times since I was a student here. By the beginning of the 1990s the United States merchant marine reached its lowest ebb. Fewer merchant ships flew the American flag than at any time in our history. And some were arguing that we could make it through a major military action without a strong merchant marine.

Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm changed all that forever. Military action in the Persian Gulf told everyone what all of us here today know very well. Our nation cannot survive without a strong merchant marine. In peacetime your job is to move our commerce. In wartime, you are the leaders who supply our troops. The midshipmen who served in Desert Shield/Desert Storm upheld the fine tradition of this Academy and helped revitalize the merchant marine.

Acta non verba. Deeds not words. That motto will guide you through the most challenging times. It is the reason for success of the 18,000 or so graduates of this great school. It serves as a challenge to you who have chosen a lifetime of challenge, opportunity and service.

You enter into this challenge at an exciting time, one of innovation, self assertion, and in light of timeless belief that one citizen can make a difference.

As Winston Churchill wrote, "You will make all kinds of mistakes, but as long as you are generous and true ... you cannot hurt the world or even seriously distress her. She was made to be wooed and won by youth."

Churchill's belief outlived its eloquence. It guides us still, in our finer moments. And it renews itself with each class, each review on these grounds. The men who left this school to serve their country in time of stress, like those who gave birth to this Republic, shared a belief in America and the strength of her sons and daughters. Time has not disproved them -- nor has it tarnished their beliefs. It is their greatest legacy to all of you.

It is a legacy supported by those who will receive the Merchant Marine Expeditionary Medal today. Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm called. And this Academy sent its finest. In their service, the 152 cadets advanced your precious legacy. The world is a better place for it.

Two-thirds of the people who served in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm received medals earlier. These 42 midshipmen were still at sea at that time.

It is my honor ... as the first cabinet officer to have attended this Academy ... to award these medals. And to say to all of you ... hold the tradition. **Acta Non Verba.**

#