

Remarks of James G. Huse, Jr.

Boston College Veterans Association Reunion, May 30, 2015

I am honored to be back at Boston College this morning as a veteran ROTC graduate of 50 years ago. The years have gone by so quickly. This phenomenon of time passing surprises me more and every day.

I was commissioned in the Regular Army here on campus on my graduation day, June 7, 1965. Our ROTC commissioning as Reserve Officers had occurred several days before, but my swearing in as a Regular had to occur after graduation. I wore my Army green officer's uniform under my graduation gown and the heat temperature that day reached record levels - so much so - that the late and beloved Cardinal Cushing, scheduled to give the commencement address that day, came to the podium in Alumni Stadium and said in his inimitable style, "It would be a sin against charity for me to speak today" then blessed us and wished us good fortune to a standing ovation.

In those days, BC had a sizable ROTC cadet brigade and on drill days during the school year the stretch of the roadway from the Roberts Center to Saint Ignatius Church would resound with shouted orders, staccato drum beats and the tramp of hundreds of cadets as the companies, and battalions of the brigade learned drill and ceremonies.

Those Boston College memories and many others

Nothing more embodies the core value of commitment to service that is such a paramount dimension of a BC education than military service in the Armed Forces. The sublime expression of that commitment to service is the names of those inscribed on the beautiful Veteran's Memorial behind me.

We are here today to reflect on those sacrifices by these BC alumni who share our heritage as well as the bond we all share as BC veterans answering that call to service by our Nation.

This remembering is a responsibility and a trust that we have to sustain. Like most veterans, I live every day with my personal memories of war -- of friends I lost and miss --and with the private emotions that are the product of both.

Like most veterans I feel an intense obligation to validate these sacrifices in any way I can, and yet at the same time, I feel my our Nation.





I personally believe that when President Nixon ended the draft in 1973, much more disappeared than just the idea of universal military service. What also occurred was

The answering chorus of that song - a simple but clear affirmation - is a good way for me to end this address. Standing in that cemetery in West Medford, so long ago, gathered under our classroom flag and foil covered cans of lilacs, we 6<sup>th</sup> graders, with our strong and sincere children`s voices, we proudly sang:

"Long ago our soldiers brave fought to make us free."

Fought and died to make this land safe for you and me."

Please join me in the effort to honor the spirit and profound commitment