

President's remarks
Send-off Ceremony for Bravo Company, 612th Engineer Battalion
Ohio Army National Guard
November 12, 2004

Soldiers, families, and friends of Bravo Company: Welcome to Heidelberg College! We are honored to host this send-off ceremony in this gymnasium; for it is a special place for the Heidelberg family.

Here at our freshman convocation, we welcome new students and their families. Here at our commencement we send our graduates on to a life of purpose with distinction. But nothing we do here makes us more proud than this occasion.

Today we celebrate you. Your sacrifice and service remind us of the price of freedom and the privilege of democracy.

Today, women and girls are able to go to school in Afghanistan. Iraqi boys and girls are ready to get back to class. And our own Heidelberg students are able to pursue their education here in Tiffin, Ohio at one of the nation's highly rated liberal arts colleges.

Too often we take for granted in a democracy our freedom to pursue education.

But today we are recommitted to these principles.

As we have heard, Bravo Company, 612th Engineer Battalion has a long and distinguished history ... as does this College.

Founded in 1850, Heidelberg has often been touched by wars -- beginning with the Civil War. Today's send-off ceremony re-creates a similar event some 140 years ago.

A member of the Heidelberg class of 1865, Florence Cronise, wrote that she remembered, and I quote, "That day in 1863 several of our boys ... donned the Blue and marched away to the music of the drum and fife to do duty for their country."

"These were serious days for Heidelberg, but our dear Alma Mater, then in her youth, held bravely on, bidding Godspeed to those going and tenderly caring for those remaining."

Now, these many years later, we again watch sons and daughters, husbands and wives, dads and moms "march away" to serve our nation. These are again serious days for all of us.

Please know that Heidelberg students, faculty, staff, and alumni -- as we did in the Civil War - offer comfort to those of you remaining and "Godspeed" to those of you going to serve.

We thank you for your service and we thank you for the privilege of allowing us to host you for this memorable and touching ceremony.

On behalf of the Heidelberg College family, God's blessings on each and every one of you.