



By Micah Ables

During my time in command, I had numerous conversations with disappointed young soldiers who regretted that they hadn't had a chance to go to war and get a deployment patch. I signed reenlistment contracts for several outstanding soldiers who wanted to leave our unit to deploy to a combat zone with another. I had many conversations with frustrated young officers who signed up to serve when the war was still relatively "hot" and were disappointed to commission after the war slowed down. I know there are far more across

the Army who feel this way.

This note is for you:

Be proud of your service. Although you may not feel like it most days, you are a part of the legacy of your unit and our Army. It's easy to get bitter or cynical about motor pool Mondays, garrison gate guard, range details, red cycle taskings, and on and on and on. But never forget that, despite all that frustration and the less-than-glorious action, you are integral to your unit and the Army, as well as their legacy and role: to stand ready to fight and win our nation's wars.

It's true that we weren't granted the terror and misery of storming the [beaches of Omaha](#) on D-Day with the 29th Infantry Division. We weren't privileged to feel defeat alongside the overwhelmed Task Force Smith in Korea's [Battle of Osan](#). We weren't fortunate enough to fight for three ferociously bloody weeks with the 101st Airborne Division at Vietnam's [Firebase Ripcord](#). We didn't have the opportunity to fight through nightmarish ambushes with the 1st Cavalry Division on the [Long Road Home](#) through Sadr City in Iraq.

As soldiers, we don't get to choose our mission, nor the time we live in. But we do choose to swear an oath to support and defend our Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic. We have sworn that oath at a time when few other Americans are willing to take that step. We have trained to fight and win our nation's wars. We have stood ready to go wherever and do whatever is needed. *You* did this. Don't minimize that. Be proud of that.

For better or worse, your unit's missions may have taken you to the tense but peaceful Korean peninsula, to the hot but calm deserts of Kuwait, or to the quiet but uneasy forests of Poland. You may have only traveled to the relatively safe proving grounds of the National Training Center, the Joint Readiness Training Center, or the Joint Multinational Readiness Center. Or maybe you've only gone as far as the M4, tank, or Bradley range up your local

Range Road. No matter how anticlimactic they may seem, all of these are no less a part of your units' legacies and active military readiness than any other.

I am proud of your willingness to train and serve, to be ready to answer whenever and wherever our nation calls, even if you never get the call you want. You should be proud of that, too.

*This was adapted from Micah Ables' change-of-command speech. Currently, Micah Ables is a freelance writer. Before leaving active duty, Micah was an HHC and mechanized infantry company commander during a rotation to Poland and Georgia with the 1st Cavalry Division. He previously served as a platoon leader and executive officer in the 101st Airborne Division with whom he deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan. Find him on Facebook and Twitter @mableswrites.*

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