

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE

U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

Rear Admiral E. C. Kalbfus, U.S.N.

to the .

GRADUATING CLASSES OF 1941.

(one copy only)

Again it is my privilege and pleasure to testify to and express my appreciation of the consistently efficient attention to duty of the Chief of Staff and the officers of the Staff of the College. While the numerical strength of the Staff has not, during this year, been subject to the attrition which necessarily was imposed last year, a certain percentage of loss has, nevertheless, been occasioned by emergency demand for services of officers elsewhere. The additional burden thrust upon those who have remained has been effectively assumed as a matter of course and there has been no interference with smooth operation.

Due also to the emergency, the numerical strength of the graduating classes is somewhat below that of former years. I am happy to say, however, that existing orders of the Navy Department will ensure that the number of officers who pass through the College during the coming year will be more than four times the number of those who receive their diplomas today.

The civilian employees have performed their duties with the same loyal efficiency that always characterizes their efforts. I am happy to say that the value of this trained body of assistants has been fully recognized by higher authority. There has been no disposition to disrupt this organization even in emergency and none appears in prospect. The individuals who compose it, many of them identified with the College for more than twenty years, have contributed much to this institution. They fully merit the commendation which I am now happy to bestow.

Today marks the close of the 86th year of the existence of the Naval War College. From the standpoint of international affairs the year has been, without question, the most momentous of its long career. From the standpoint of the



opportunity to keep in close touch with the progress of events abroad, and to study the possible relation of these events to our own domestic welfare and security, it has undoubtedly been the most profitable. It may, with propriety, be stated that every advantage has been taken of this opportunity and that much benefit of both a practical and a fundamental character has been derived.

The student of warfare and even the observer who views the march of these portentous events dispassionately, if there be any such, cannot fail to be profoundly impressed with the thoroughness, the swiftness, the precision, of the warfare of the present day. Here is being demonstrated the development of a technique, to the highest peak the world has ever known, which employs modern weapons on a fundamentally sound basis. There has been no omission, no failure to face the facts. Instead, every mistake of the past has been turned to good account in the present, a procedure always bound to be profitable when one is willing to confess a mistake.

Certainly, this demonstration of the application of fundamentals to modern technique must be equally impressive of the danger that threatens our own institutions. These institutions, being themselves fundamentally in direct opposition to the concepts and doctrines of potential foes, are



become a recognized source of ever-increasing friction. It is for their perpetuation of these, and not alone for the protection of our lives and property, that the efforts of this government are being prosecuted. It is true that our forefathers, seeking the enjoyment of these institutions in a new land, were frequently forced to withdraw to the stockade in the interest of self protection. Once inside, they resisted Indian attack as best they could, completely deprived of the freedom which they had hitherto enjoyed. But at best they were only temporarily safe and, even then, their crops not infrequently were destroyed, their land ravaged, and their lives lost. It was not until the danger had been completely removed, and removed not by shooting at the foe through the loopholes but by effort exerted far beyond the confines of the stockade, that there could be permanent return to normal pursuits. There appears to be food for thought in the fact that departures from the fundamental meaning of the word "defense" are not infrequently voiced today. History teaches that it is wise to forestall attack rather than to await it.

And so, at this most critical stage in the history of the world, another body of experienced and responsible officers, with their professional judgment fortified by their studies here, goes forth to new duties. I have already privately expressed to them my appreciation of their application and indus-



try, and my conviction that they have taken full advantage of their opportunities. I now publicly say to them "Well done" and wish them every success. Schooled in the fundamentals of the warfare of today they are prepared to apply them in terms of modern technique. They go to join those other graduates of this College who, in this hour of need, are to be found in all the highest command positions, afloat and ashore, which it is the province of the Navy to fill.

The College is particularly honored today by the presence of the Secretary of the Navy and these graduating classes are particularly to be envied in that they are to receive their diplomas at his hands. He has set an example of personal self-sacrifice which all of us will do well to emulate. His fearless utterances have resounded around the world. His warning to unfriendly nations is that of the rattlesnake flag of our own forefathers, "Don't tread on me." It is my privilege and pleasure to present the Honorable Frank Knox.

