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ADDRESS

AT GRADUATION EXERCISES

OF

SENIOR CLASS, AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE SCHOOL,

QUANTICO, VA.

DELIVERED BY ADMIRAL R.A. SPRUANCE, U.S.N.

ON 29 MAY, 1948.

GENERAL SHEPHERD, MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS OF THE SENIOR COURSE OF THE AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE SCHOOL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

AS A RESULT OF HAVING LISTENED TO A NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS OF AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS GIVEN AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE BY TEAMS OF OFFICERS FROM THE MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS, I FEEL THAT I ALREADY HAVE A CONSIDERABLE ACQUAINTANCE WITH THIS INSTITUTION. IN FACT, I WAS ONCE ON THE POINT OF RECEIVING ORDERS TO THE STAFF HERE, BUT AT THE LAST MOMENT IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE OFFICER WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN MY PREDECESSOR WAS TO REMAIN ANOTHER YEAR. THAT WAS BACK IN 1927, WHEN I HAD JUST FINISHED A COURSE AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE.

ONE OF THESE PRESENTATIONS THAT WAS PUT ON AT NEWPORT DURING THE LATE 1930s COVERED THE CAPTURE OF TRUK. LATER I WAS TO RECALL IT VERY DISTINCTLY. THIS WAS WHEN WE WERE TAKING THE MARSHALL ISLANDS IN FEBRUARY 1944 AND I WAS MEDITATING ON WHAT OUR NEXT OPERATION MIGHT BE. AT THAT TIME IT LOOKED AS IF OUR OBJECTIVE WOULD BE EITHER TRUK OR THE MARIANAS, WITH TRUK AS A STRONG PROBABILITY. IN PORING OVER THE CHARTS OF TRUK -- PART OF THE ROLL OF SECRET JAPANESE CHARTS WHICH WE HAD BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO GET POSSESSION OF AT KWAJALEIN --, I FELT THAT THE MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS HAD DECIDED UPON THE BEST, AND PERHAPS THE ONLY, FEASIBLE PLAN FOR THE CAPTURE OF THAT ATOLL.

THE THOUGHT AND STUDY WHICH THE OFFICERS OF THE MARINE CORPS GAVE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE DURING THE YEARS BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS RESULTED IN GREAT

IMPROVEMENTS BEING MADE IN THE ART. THERE WERE MANY PERSONS DURING THIS PERIOD WHO BELIEVED THAT AMPHIBIOUS LANDINGS WERE IMPOSSIBLE, IF MADE IN THE FACE OF STRONGLY DEFENDED POSITIONS.

WITHOUT THE AMPHIBIAN TRACTORS AND THE RAMP TYPE LANDING SHIPS AND LANDING CRAFT, WHICH WERE DESIGNED, TESTED AND THEN PRODUCED IN QUANTITY ONLY IN THE NICK OF TIME, OUR SUCCESSFUL AMPHIBIOUS LANDINGS DURING WORLD WAR II MIGHT HAVE HAD A DIFFERENT OUTCOME. FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS DURING THE 1920s AND THE 1930s THERE WERE PLENTY OF IDEAS IN THE HEADS OF OUR MORE IMAGINATIVE OFFICERS CONCERNING DESIGNS FOR LANDING CRAFT, BUT THERE WAS LITTLE OR NO MONEY AVAILABLE TO MATERIALIZE THESE IDEAS AND FIND OUT IF THEY WOULD WORK.

I REMEMBER VERY VIVIDLY BEING ON BOARD ADMIRAL KING'S FLAGSHIP, THE TEXAS, OFF CULEBRA IN THE WINTER OF 1941 TO WITNESS SOME AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING EXERCISES, AND HEARING GENERAL HOLLAND SMITH DISCOURSE MOST ENTHUSIASTICALLY ON THE MERITS OF THE NEW "ALLIGATOR". HE SAID THAT IT COULD LAND OVER ANY KIND OF A BEACH, EVEN, HE SAID WHEN I PRESSED HIM, OVER THE MANGROVE SWAMPS OF PUERTO RICO. SO FAR AS I KNOW, THE AMPHIBIAN TRACTORS NEVER WERE CALLED UPON TO NEGOTIATE ANY MANGROVE SWAMPS, BUT THEY DID CONSTITUTE THE FIRST WAVE IN ALL OF OUR LANDINGS IN THE CENTRAL PACIFIC OPERATIONS, FROM TARAWA TO OKINAWA. AT TARAWA THEY WERE THE ONLY LANDING CRAFT THAT WERE ABLE TO CROSS THE REEF AND ACTUALLY REACH THE BEACH.

THE PROPER DESIGN OF LANDING SHIPS AND LANDING CRAFT WAS, AS I HAVE SAID, ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR AMPHIBIOUS

OPERATIONS; BUT THIS WAS ONLY ONE PROBLEM OF THE MANY THAT HAD TO BE SOLVED, IF LANDINGS WERE TO SUCCEED AGAINST STRONG AND DETERMINED RESISTANCE. COMBAT LOADING OF APAs AND AKAs, UNDERWATER DEMOLITION, GUNFIRE AND AIR SUPPORT, COMMUNICATIONS -- TO MENTION ONLY A FEW OF THE OTHERS -- ALL REQUIRED CAREFUL STUDY.

ON GOING INTO ACTION FOR THE FIRST TIME WE FOUND THAT OUR BEST THOUGHT-OUT PLANS REQUIRED LATER MODIFICATION IN THE LIGHT OF ACTUAL COMBAT EXPERIENCE, AND THAT EXCEPTIONAL VALOR IN THE TROOPS WAS CALLED FOR TO MAKE GOOD UNFORESEEN DEFICIENCIES IN OUR PLANNING. AS A MATTER OF FACT, EVEN WITH THE BEST OF PLANNING AND OF PRELIMINARY TRAINING, I ALWAYS HAVE HAD THE FEELING THAT THE MARGIN BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN AN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATION CONDUCTED AGAINST STRONGLY DEFENDED POSITIONS WAS A NARROW ONE. I WOULD NEVER WANT TO CONDUCT SUCH AN OPERATION WITH TROOPS POORLY TRAINED, POORLY LED, OR OF POOR QUALITY. TO DO SO WOULD BE TO COURT DEFEAT, AND I DO NOT THINK WE CAN AFFORD TO RISK DEFEAT IN AN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATION.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, YOU HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY ASKED YOURSELVES WHETHER THE UNITED STATES WILL AGAIN HAVE TO CONDUCT AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS IN THE UNFORTUNATE EVENT OF ANOTHER WAR.

SOME PROPHETS SAY THAT THE ADVENT OF THE ATOMIC BOMB HAS MADE FURTHER LARGE SCALE AMPHIBIOUS LANDINGS IMPOSSIBLE. IF SO, THEN WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FIGHT ON OTHER CONTINENTS, AND OUR ENEMIES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COME TO NORTH AMERICA. A WAR FOUGHT ALONG THESE LINES WOULD SEEM TO RESOLVE ITSELF INTO AN EXCHANGE OF LONG RANGE AIR BLOWS. I DOUBT IF A DECISION COULD

BE REACHED IN SUCH A WAR BETWEEN POWERFUL AND WELL MATCHED ANTAGONISTS, WIDELY SEPARATED BY SEA.

THE ATOMIC BOMB IS UNQUESTIONABLY THE MOST POTENT WEAPON EVER DEvised BY MAN, BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE THREAT OF IT WILL STOP WARS. IF WAR COMES TO US AGAIN, BOTH THE INSULAR POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES IN WORLD GEOGRAPHY, AND THE VERY THREAT OF MORE POWERFUL EXPLOSIVES CARRIED THROUGH THE AIR INCREASINGLY LONG DISTANCES, WILL REQUIRE US TO PUSH OUR FRONT LINES TOWARD OUR ENEMY. ONLY BY DOING THIS CAN WE IMPROVE THE PROTECTION OF OUR HOME TERRITORY FROM ENEMY ATTACK.

HOW TO COUNTER THE ATOMIC BOMB AS A THREAT TO AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS IS UNDOUBTEDLY A SUBJECT TO WHICH YOU MUST HAVE GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION DURING YOUR COURSE HERE. LIKE THE COUNTER TO THE NEW SUBMARINE, THERE IS NO ONE EASY ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM, BUT, LIKE IT ALSO, A PRACTICAL SOLUTION MUST BE FOUND WHICH WILL PERMIT US TO PROJECT OUR NATIONAL STRENGTH OVERSEAS AND KEEP OUR LOSSES WITHIN ACCEPTABLE LIMITS WHILE DOING SO.

IN THE CURRENT POPULAR THINKING ON THE SUBJECT OF NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS, THERE SEEMS TO BE A TENDENCY TO BELIEVE THAT FUTURE WARS WILL BE FOUGHT IN THE AIR AND THAT PERHAPS LONG RANGE AIR BLOWS MAY BE ABLE TO DECIDE THE ISSUE IN A WAR OF SHORT DURATION. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST WAR CERTAINLY PROVES THAT CONTROL OF THE AIR IN A THEATER OF OPERATIONS IS ESSENTIAL AND THAT IT IS ONE OF THE FIRST OBJECTIVES SOUGHT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AIR ARM SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER, OBSCURE THE FACTS, FIRST, THAT ONLY GROUND TROOPS CAN SEIZE AND HOLD

TERRITORY AND, SECOND, THAT, AS COMPARED WITH SEA TRANSPORT, MOVEMENT BY AIR, WHETHER OF LARGE NUMBERS OF PERSONNEL OR LARGE AMOUNTS OF CARGO, IS A VERY EXPENSIVE METHOD OF OVERSEAS CARRIAGE. I BELIEVE WE MUST, AS IN WORLD WAR II, HAVE OVERSEAS BASES, BOTH TO ASSIST IN KEEPING SECURE OUR NECESSARY SEA COMMUNICATIONS AND TO BRING OUR STRATEGIC AIR EFFORT TO BEAR ON THE ENEMY IN AS ECONOMICAL A METHOD AS POSSIBLE. WITH OVERSEAS BASES THE EXPLOSIVES WHICH ARE DESTINED TO BE USED AGAINST THE ENEMY'S HOME TERRITORY WILL TRAVEL BY WATER AS FAR AS THEY CAN SAFELY GO, AND THEN WILL COMPLETE THEIR JOURNEY BY AIR. THE DISTANCES TO BE FLOWN BY THE BOMBERS WILL BE GREATLY REDUCED, THE BOMB LOADS AND THE NUMBER OF SORTIES OUR AIRCRAFT CAN MAKE WILL BE INCREASED, AND THEIR OPERATIONAL CASUALTIES WILL BE REDUCED. INSTEAD OF WEAK RAIDS CONDUCTED OVER GREAT DISTANCES, WE SHALL BE ABLE TO BUILD UP TO A SUSTAINED STRATEGIC BOMBER OFFENSIVE.

WAR HAS AS ITS ULTIMATE AIM THE REDUCTION OF THE ENEMY'S WILL TO RESIST, TO THE POINT WHERE HE WILL ACCEPT THE TERMS WHICH WE DESIRE TO IMPOSE UPON HIM. A BY-PRODUCT OF SUCCESSFUL AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS -- OVER AND ABOVE WHAT ACTUALLY ACCRUES FROM THE CAPTURE OF INSULAR POSITIONS OR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTINENTAL BEACHHEADS FOR USE BY AN INVADING ARMY -- LIES IN THEIR EFFECT ON THE ENEMY'S MORALE. NOT ONLY HAVE THE ENEMY'S DEFENDING FORCES BEEN DEFEATED, WHICH IS BAD FOR HIS MORALE AND GOOD FOR OURS, BUT THE OFTEN WIDE SEPARATION OF THE AMPHIBIOUS OBJECTIVES SERVES TO BRING HOME TO THE ENEMY PUBLIC THE RATE AT WHICH THE WAR APPEARS TO BE GOING AGAINST HIM. DURING WORLD

WAR II OUR CAPTURE OF TULAGI AND GUADALCANAL, AND OUR HOLDING OF THESE POSITIONS IN SPITE OF GREAT EFFORTS TO RETAKE THEM, SHATTERED THE LEGEND OF THE INVINCIBILITY OF THE JAPANESE SOLDIER. LATER ON IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT TO CONCEAL FROM THE JAPANESE PEOPLE THE RATE AT WHICH THE WAR WAS MOVING TOWARD THEM, WHEN THEY LEARNED THAT OUR AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS WERE ADVANCING BY FROM SEVERAL HUNDREDS TO A THOUSAND MILES AT A CLIP.

LOOKING BACK ON OUR WAR IN THE PACIFIC, IT IS A SOURCE OF GREAT PRIDE AND SATISFACTION TO ME TO REMEMBER THAT ALL SIX MARINE DIVISIONS TOOK PART IN OUR CENTRAL PACIFIC OPERATIONS -- THE SECOND AT TARAWA; THE FOURTH AT THE ROI-NAMUR END OF KWAJALEIN; THE SECOND AND FOURTH AT SAIPAN AND TINIAN; THE THIRD AND THE FIRST PROVISIONAL BRIGADE, LATER TO BE EMBODIED IN THE NEW SIXTH DIVISION, AT GUAM; THE THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH AT IWO JIMA; AND, FINALLY, THE FIRST AND SIXTH AT OKINAWA. YOUR COMMANDANT, GENERAL SHEPHERD, DEMONSTRATED HIS GREAT GIFTS OF LEADERSHIP AND HIS AGGRESSIVE FIGHTING SPIRIT WHILE IN COMMAND OF THE FIRST PROVISIONAL BRIGADE AT GUAM AND AGAIN WHEN HE COMMANDED THE SIXTH DIVISION AT OKINAWA. IT IS MY CONVICTION THAT NO FINER BODY OF FIGHTING MEN HAS EVER EXISTED THAN THE UNITED STATES MARINES WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THE JAPANESE IN THE PACIFIC DURING THE RECENT WAR.

CONGRESS HAS, IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947, ASSIGNED TO THE MARINE CORPS THE DUTY "TO DEVELOP, IN COORDINATION WITH THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE, THOSE PHASES OF AMPHIBIOUS OP-

ERATIONS WHICH PERTAIN TO THE TACTICS, TECHNIQUE AND EQUIPMENT EMPLOYED BY LANDING FORCES". IN THE MEMORANDUM OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, ISSUED ON 21 APRIL 1948 TO THE SECRETARIES OF THE ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE AND THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, IT WAS FURTHER STATED THAT "THE MARINE CORPS SHALL HAVE PRIMARY INTEREST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOSE LANDING-FORCE TACTICS, TECHNIQUE AND EQUIPMENT WHICH ARE OF COMMON INTEREST TO THE ARMY AND THE MARINE CORPS."

I FEEL THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY THUS GIVEN TO THE MARINE CORPS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE HAS BEEN WISELY PLACED. I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT THE WORK DONE AT THE AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE SCHOOL HERE AT QUANTICO WILL, UNDER THE ABLE GUIDANCE OF GENERAL SHEPHERD AND HIS SUCCESSORS, SERVE TO RETAIN A KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXPERIENCE WE HAVE GAINED IN THE PAST AND TO IMPROVE UPON IT AS NECESSARY TO KEEP US IN THE FOREFRONT OF PROGRESS. CHANGES IN THE ART OF WAR ARE RAPID THESE DAYS, AND AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE HAS RIGHTLY BEEN TERMED THE MOST COMPLEX FORM OF WARFARE. THE HIGHEST COORDINATION IS REQUIRED BETWEEN THE VARIOUS SERVICES ENGAGED IN AN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATION, AND THE MOST WHOLEHEARTED COOPERATION. I TRUST YOU GENTLEMEN WHO ARE COMPLETING YOUR COURSE TODAY WILL FIND YOUR ABILITY TO WORK IN HARMONY WITH THOSE OF OTHER SERVICES INCREASED, AND YOUR IMAGINATIONS STIMULATED TO FORESEE AND TO PROVIDE FOR MEETING THE PROBLEMS THAT MAY CONFRONT YOU IN YOUR FUTURE CAREERS.