



CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR SOCIETY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CHARTERED BY THE CONGRESS

Medal of Honor Recipient
SSG Clinton L Romesha
US ARMY

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Dear Recruits of 2020,

I write to you today with the deepest admiration and respect for the path that each of you has chosen to take at this critical juncture not only in your own life but also in the history of our nation.

More than twenty years ago, when I was 18 years old and about to graduate from high school, I too chose this same path by electing to join the U.S. military and serve my country.

Back then, in the spring of 1999, we were at peace. The wars that would draw us to the opposite side of the world in Afghanistan and Iraq were still a few years away, while the prospect of combating an enemy like a global pandemic seemed not only distant but improbable. So my decision to join the Army was in response to the call of a different kind of duty than yours.

In my case, it was a summons rooted in the patriotic love of country to which my family had been responding for three generations: my grandfather in World War II, my father during the Vietnam War, and both of my older brothers during the years that directly preceded my own graduation. And in deciding to answer that call, each of my forebearers affirmed a creed that I, too, would come to honor, uphold, and define myself by:

If not me, then who? If not now, then when?

Unlike me, you have been asked to serve your country during a time of crisis, a moment when we are in great peril and when the need for the sacrifices that you will be called to make on behalf of your nation are urgent and compelling. And yet, despite this difference, there are a number of elements that connect us together.

You are about to join a fraternity like no other: a brotherhood, a family, that is shaped and united by a cause that will imbue you with something unique, for which there is no substitute.

From this moment forward, you will belong to an elite group of Americans, comprising less than one percent of our citizenry, who voluntarily heeded your nation's call to serve it, to protect it, and to defend it at any cost.

Believe me when I tell you: there is nothing nobler than that.

The future that now lies before you will offer great uncertainty, immense demands, and no guarantees—but it will also afford you something that is both magnificent and priceless.

In choosing to wear the uniform of the greatest country on earth, you will ensure that whatever the future may hold, you will be prepared to meet its challenges head-on with dignity, integrity, and pride.

Seniors, you inspire me! With this choice that you are about to make, you will demonstrate a depth of character that is both rare and precious because it is rooted in a commitment that extends far beyond your own interests to embrace something greater than yourself. Which is why I want to let you in on a little secret—something that never occurred to me when I was your age and about to head down the very same path.

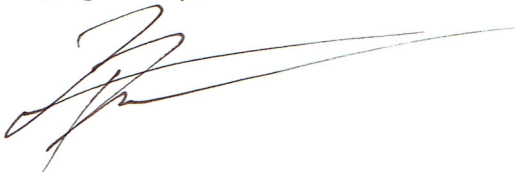
In making this choice, you are about to discover a love, a sense of comradeship, that will bind you indelibly and forever to the brothers and sisters who will stand to your left and your right as you move through what you will one day look back upon—and celebrate—as the most difficult, the most challenging, and the most rewarding time of your entire life.

This love that you will find for one another will define who you are. It will bind you together. And it will motivate each of you to overcome obstacles, to achieve goals, and to conquer adversaries that you never thought possible.

I believe that each and every one of you harbors the potential for greatness. The only thing you need now is the opportunity to demonstrate it.

I know you will!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'CL. Romesha', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Clinton L Romesha
SSG US Army
MOH
Afghanistan