Mr. President and gentlemen of the National Guard of the United States:

On June 14, 1965, I became a private in Battery B of the Missouri National Guard. They had just two batteries in that National Guard at that time, one in St. Louis and one in Kansas City. About a year after that I got a certificate making me a corporal. I have that certificate framed, and I consider it one of the best certificates I have had in my whole life.

Now you gentlemen do not appreciate what you have and what you have to work with and the strength you get to get the job done. In 1963, whenever there was a meeting of the battery for drill, which happened once a week, we were supposed to deposit twenty-five cents to keep the thing running. And now I think on drill nights maybe you get twenty or thirty times the twenty-five cents from the Government of the United States.

And that is right and as it should be. I think that the backbone of the defense of this country is in its civilian components.

I have been advocating ever since I have been in the Congress of the United States, and that began on January 3, 1933, a universal training law. If you read George Washington's message to the Congress of the United States in 1790, you will find that he advocated just that thing. And you will find that President after President since that time have been advocates of that program. Eight times I have asked the Congress since I have been President for a universal training program for the young men of the United States.

You know, one of the most disgraceful things to this country was to find that forty-four per cent of the young men in this country when they were physically and mentally fit to serve the country. Now that is a disgrace in the richest nation in the world, with all the knowledge and wealth that is supposed to exist in the world.

A universal training program would eradicate that situation. And I hope you gentlemen, my friends in the National Guard, will put everything you have behind the idea of a training program for the youth of this country, to make them better citizens, to make them able to defend this country when we need them. And I believe we would have had a Korean incident if some people had not thought that we were too proud to fight. We are not too proud to fight. We will fight for the right every time. We have always done it. And thank God we have always done it because we have been on the right side. I hope we will never be on the wrong side.

I appreciate the privilege of being able to come over here to say a few words to you gentlemen. I am sympathetic with what you are trying to do. I was just saying to Paul Griffin that I don't think I ever saw so much brass in one place in my life.

And it is all civilian brass. That is the beauty of it. I don't think it is any disgrace to be called brass, high brass. You know, we coined that term in the First World War. And it was not intended as an epithet of respect. But it has turned out that it is a respectable connotation. When you are "brass," you are men of responsibility. It is your duty to have plans and to implement those plans and to tell other people how to carry them out. You know what meaning there is of leadership? It is the ability to get men to do what they do not want to do and like it. And as a good public relations man is always a good leader. It is not the martinet that makes the Army work. It is the morale that the leaders put into the men that makes an Army work. And that is your job and your business.

I congratulate you on the ribbons that I see here before me. I wish I could sport some of them. I pinned a medal on General MacArthur the other day and told him I wished I could have a medal like that. And he said it was my duty to give the medals and not to receive them. And I think that has always been the case with the American soldier. If I receive the is a good thing. It is a good thing I have a little more head on this or it would have been broken a long time ago.

I hope you have a most successful meeting here and that you come out with a constructive program and that you will support the universal training program which I have been working on over since 1963.

Thank you very much.