

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the United States Naval Academy Midshipmen
April 15, 2025

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, everybody. Please.

Good to be with you. Good-looking people behind me. Too many good-looking people. Never like that many. You look great.

We had a wonderful team here yesterday, Ohio State. They also had an incredible season, as you know. And we had the Dodgers here. They just won the World Series last year. World Series. So we have a lot of people celebrating at the White House. There's no place like it. Very special. Very, very special.

And it's an honor to have you all. And I want to say, number one, at ease. Just enjoy yourselves. *[Laughter]* You can take it. I'm the boss here. You can take it. *[Laughter]* So you don't have to listen to them for that. Just—you're going to have a good day.

And if it's okay, I'm going to invite you over to the Oval Office when we're finished and present you with a little something special. Okay?

Participants. Yes, sir.

The President. So let's finish up, and we'll head over to the Oval Office together.

Okay. Today, it's a great honor to officially present the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the 2024 Navy Midshipmen football team. A great team. Really great team. Great people. Congratulations.

And we're thrilled to be joined by a proud Marine Corps veteran, Vice President J.D. Vance. J.D.—where is J.D.? What the hell happened to J.D.? *[Laughter]* Because he was—he was just here. He must have gotten a call from China. *[Laughter]* He's—he'll be here.

Along with Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. Thank you, Pete, very much. You're doing a great job too. The Houthis aren't doing very well, but you're doing well, aren't you, huh?

Secretary of the Navy John Phelan, a friend of mine. Great guy. A very successful person, by the way.

Our new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dan "Razin" Caine. Where is he? There he is. That's—I talked about him in my speeches for years. Who knew I was going to be appointing him to be the top? And it's an honor. It's a real honor. Everything you did with me was perfect. I said: "What happened to that guy Razin Caine? I want him." And that's what happened. And so, you're going to do a great job. I have no doubt about it. Thanks, Dan.

Acting Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James Kilby. Admiral, thank you. Congratulations.

And Superintendent of the Naval Academy, Vice Admiral Yvette Davids. Oh, hello, Yvette. *[Laughter]* How are you, Yvette?

But I especially want to thank and congratulate Athletic Director Chet Gladchuk, who will soon retire after 24 years—I looked at him, and I said: "This is a young-looking guy. I don't like this retirement stuff." But after 24 years. And he's going to do other things, I guarantee you, that will also be incredible, but it's going to be very hard to top what he's done as Athletic Director.

He's had the honor of four national championships, 251 conference titles, and 352 all-American athletes. That's not bad.

Where are you? Where are you? That is not bad.

So you had all of these all-American athletes. Any name athlete that really stands out, or were they just all great athletes?

U.S. Naval Academy Director of Athletics Chester S. Gladchuk, Jr. Every one is an all-American.

The President. Every one. As far as you're concerned, they're all the same, right? [*Laughter*]

Great job you've done. What a record that is. Who has a record like that?

I also want to thank some of the newly appointed members of the Naval Academy's Board of Visitors. Sean Spicer is here, and Walt Nauta.

Now, Walt could be—you know, he's thinking about going to Guam someday, and he'll be taking over as Governor. But we won't mention that right now, Walt, will we, huh? He's fantastic—he's been with me for a long time, and he's great.

And Sean—where's Sean Spicer? Sean, congratulations. This is—it's a great honor. I can tell you, every—a lot of people wanted that position. So you guys are going to do it well. I have no doubt about it.

The story of this incredible season began last February when the Navy football team entered the weight room for the winter workouts. I wish I could have joined you, but I just never was—I was never too much into lifting weights. I should have done it. I could have been President someday, if I did, huh? [*Laughter*]

After four disappointing seasons—they were so disappointed—your coach, Brian Newberry, plastered pictures of this magnificent trophy on every wall to remind you of the ultimate prize. And in 2024, you lived up to Coach Newberry's vision, and you showed the world the Midshipmen and—that you know how to fight, fight, fight and win, win, win, right? And that's you did.

Participants. Yes, sir.

The President. That's what you did. That's a—wow. That's a hell of a trophy. [*Laughter*] How much does that weigh? I don't know, am I supposed to carry that? I don't think it can be done. I hear it—it's quite heavy, actually.

You won 10 of 13 games, including 9 by double digits. You beat Air Force. You beat Army. And now this 170-pound trophy—that's what it is—is yours once again.

And I have to tell you, you had some brilliant players. On offense, you were led by an incredible fullback, team cocaptain Daba Fofana. Where is Daba?

Fullback Daba Fofana. Right here.

The President. Where are you?

Come here. Come on up here.

Mr. Fofana. Thank you, sir.

The President. So is he a hard—Coach, is he a hard guy to tackle? [*Laughter*]

Head coach Brian Newberry. He is. He is.

The President. Could I tackle him running full speed, huh? *[Laughter]* You don't suggest it, right?

Fantastic—you want to say something?

Mr. Fofana. No, I'm good. *[Laughter]*

The President. Come on. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Fofana. I'm just going to say, we couldn't have done it without Brian Newberry here; my cocaptain here, Colin Ramos; and just everyone buying into the mission. And I'm excited. Praise the Lord.

The President. Good. That's beautiful.

That's a great player, huh? That's great. Thank you very much. That's really beautiful.

We have—on offense, we have a quarterback who is also very, very special. I hear he's great. Blake Horvath. Blake. Where are you, Blake? Where are you? Come on up here.

Strong arm or accurate?

Mr. Newberry. Both.

The President. Both. He said both, strong and accurate arm. Please.

Quarterback Blake Horvath. Oh, appreciate it. Appreciate it. *[Laughter]*

No, it's an honor—right?—to share this stage with President Trump. And you know, I speak for the team when I say that. So thank you for having us. And, you know, it's all about the team. Trophy is the team, team, team. So, you know, great honor. Thank you, sir.

The President. Are you being—back, or are you—

Mr. Horvath. Yes, sir. I'll be back next year.

The President. Oh, I'm going to be watching. *[Laughter]* *[Inaudible]*

I hear you're fantastic. Thank you very much, Blake. We're going to all be watching.

This year, Blake tied the school record for touchdown passes in a single season, rushed for more than 1,200 yards—wow, that's pretty good—and set a new school record for the longest rushing touchdown when he faked a handoff during a read option, carrying the ball 95 yards into the end zone to help beat Oklahoma. That's a serious team. We're not playing games here, Coach, huh? *[Laughter]*

Wow, that's a—is he a pretty good runner?

Mr. Newberry. Very fast.

The President. Is he fast?

Mr. Newberry. He is.

The President. That's amazing. *[Laughter]* What—95 yards. For a quarterback, I'd say that's pretty good.

But because of your teamwork, the Midshipmen had the sixth best rushing offense and the number one red zone touchdown offense—that's a big deal—in all of college football, a truly amazing achievement.

But, to succeed, you have to excel on both sides of the ball, and the Midshipmen had the number four ranked red zone defense, led by one of the best tacklers in college football, linebacker and defensive captain Colin Ramos. Where is Colin?

I got to let him speak.

Linebacker Colin Ramos. Oh, I'll say something.

The President. Say a couple.

Mr. Ramos. It's an absolute honor to be here. It was an amazing season. I'm so proud of these guys. And thank you, President Trump, for having us. Really an honor. Thank you.

The President. I'll bet you're a tough guy, huh? You've got to—[*Laughter*]—to do that, you got to be tough. Come here.

Mr. Ramos. Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

The President. Congratulations. Good.

That's beautiful. Great, huh?

Opposing teams feared your secondary, especially the first-ever Midshipman with two pick-sixes in a single game. Comeback—it was a big comeback. Dashaun Peele. Come up here.

Cornerback Dashaun Peele. Yes. Just very grateful to be here. Yes. That's it, really. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

The President. Great job. Great job.

That's called the strong silent type, right? Thank you very much, Dashaun.

And no one can forget contributions of the all-star safety, Special Teams Player of the Year, and I guess an NFL prospect—a number of them are—Ray Lane. Ray?

Safety Rayuan Lane III. Yes, I just want to say it's an honor to be here. Thank you for the support. And you know, go Navy. Beat Army.

The President. In December, I was honored to personally attend the 125th Army-Navy game in a battle that would be one of the best ever between the schools. It really went down in the history books, Coach.

After you held the lead all game, the fourth-quarter Army offense prepared to tie it up. They were getting right down there. I was there to watch, and you showed something that was amazing. You showed a very brilliant game-time "coach IQ"—I guess you'd call that, huh? Were you happy with the end? Yes, you were very happy. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Newberry. Yes, sir.

The President. Were you—did you think you were going to win the game at that point?

Mr. Newberry. Absolutely.

The President. Okay. He's got to say that—[*laughter*]—but it was—it was pretty amazing, actually.

You faked the fourth-down punt and gave the ball to the 6-foot-tall, 285-pound noseguard Landon Robinson, who found the seam and rumbled 29 yards down the field to clinch the victory and to beat Army. Okay. Where are you now? Where are you?

Participant. Right here, sir.

The President. Come on.

Wow. I wouldn't want to tackle him.

Noseguard Landon Robinson. Thank you, sir. First off, I'd just like to say thank you to Mr. President for inviting us. Super thankful.

Wouldn't be here without my teammates, you know, without my coaches for, you know, calling the play and making sure that it was open for us to run it. So super thankful and excited for our years to come. So——

The President. Great job. Great job.

Mr. Robinson. Thank you, sir. Appreciate that.

The President. That would be a hard guy to tackle, wouldn't it, Coach, huh? [*Laughter*] It's painful. It's called painful. Great job.

With the win, this trophy, you secure your spot as one of the greatest teams in Navy football history. That's a tremendous honor. You've had some great teams.

As President, I have no higher honor than serving as the Commander in Chief of the America's Armed Forces. And I have to tell you that I've gotten to know so many of the people at the academy—not only football players, just people generally.

Roger Staubach is a friend of mine and a great person. Played golf with him, and the last shot—the last time I played with him, he hit a shot. It looked like we were in trouble, and he came out of—from behind a tree from about 130 yards away. He had no shot to the green, and it ended up about 6 inches from the hole. And I said, "Well, that's Roger Staubach." You know? [*Laughter*] Right? That's him.

He was great. I tell you what, he played. He was—he'd drop back, and he was just—he was in a different league. He was really amazing. What a player. What a player. What a great guy he is. But he loves—he loves your place.

Since I took the oath of office, the spirit of our military has soared to new heights.

Today I'm proud to announce that, in February, the U.S. Navy had its best recruiting numbers since 2002. That's a long time ago. And under my administration, the Navy is on track to have the best recruiting year since the start of the war—and the war on terror, but going back further than that probably 25 to 30 years.

So I can say this strongly: About 7 months ago, Pete, they were having numbers that were a disaster. And over the last 2 months—2½ months, the numbers have gone through the roof. So it's great. Michael, same thing. And the numbers went through the roof.

And it's also true with all of the Armed Forces, and it's true with our police, with our firemen. There's a lot of spirit right now in the country that we didn't have 6 months ago.

So that's an honor, but you have your highest recruiting numbers in—in about 20 years, and that's fantastic. That's pretty good, Sean, when you hear that, right? Pretty good. You can be proud.

Within this amazing group of young men are 23 seniors who will graduate next month, including 13 Navy ensigns and 10 Marine Corps second lieutenants. Over the past 4 years, they have grown morally, mentally, and physically in preparation for their service to our Nation. They're not just great football players—and you can see this, that they are just amazing people—they're true American warriors and future submarine captains and fighter pilots and Marine infantry and Navy SEALs.

And we have the—I shouldn't say this too loud, because some people aren't thrilled, but I'm thrilled. We have the largest budget we've ever had. We're buying gorgeous new ships—gorgeous new.

And, John, you're going to be working on that. He's a great—John Phelan is a great businessman—one of the best. And you're going to get that job done.

And we're going to make them beautiful-looking ships too. The look is very important to me, John. [Laughter] You know, a lot of times they'll show me a ship or a plane and they—I say, "That doesn't look good." They say, "Well, it's stealth." I said: "I don't care if it's stealth or not. We're going to change it if we have to." [Laughter] I'm not sure I believe so much in the stealth thing. But we want the most beautiful equipment, the best equipment, and that's what we're going to get. And you're going to lead the way, and I'll help you too, because I like doing that stuff. And we're going to get a lot of ships, a lot of planes and for all of the armed services.

So I appreciate it, John. Do a job.

And I just say to the gentlemen behind me, your commitment is something very special. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, the United States will always have the strongest, fiercest, and most powerful navy on the sea. And, again, we're going to restock it like it hasn't been restocked before.

We're going to have a trillion-dollar budget. Think of it. You know, it's, like, crazy. It's crazy. But more than anybody else by double.

And we're going to be in a league—I rebuilt our Armed Forces in my first term, got them almost entirely rebuilt. Then we had a catastrophe known as Biden. And in Afghanistan, he gave so much of the equipment away, but still, it was only a small fraction of what we had done. And we're restocking it now, and we're going to have something that nobody's ever had before.

So I'm counting on all of you people in the front to get out there, and we got to get the best equipment in the world. And we—you know, we're going to pay the price, but we're going to get the best equipment in the world. We have to have it. Lots of ammunition too. We get a little low on ammunition.

I came into office, and they said—first time—they said, "Sir, we're very low on ammunition." I said: "Don't say that to the enemy. I don't want the enemy to hear that." I came in this time, and they said, "Sir, you're low on ammunition again." We gave a lot of it away, you know that. But we have to keep a lot of it. We have to keep it for ourselves also.

So we're going to work together, and we're going to do something great, Pete. And you're going to do a fantastic job doing the job. You're already doing. You've made a big impact.

So I'd like to now introduce a very special man, a great coach. You would rate him great, right? Good or great?

Director Gladchuk. Great.

The President. Good. Oh, boy, am I glad you said that.

Director Gladchuk. All-American.

The President. Would I be in trouble if he said anything? But there's nothing much you can say, because we see his record.

So, Coach, could you say a couple of words, please?

Mr. Newberry. Yes, sir.

The President. Brian Newberry. Thank you.

Mr. Newberry. Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Brian.

Mr. Newberry. And many thanks to your staff for taking care of us today and herding us around the building. I appreciate that.

And many thanks to everyone here in attendance to honor these special young men here today.

We're humbled and grateful to be here. The highest honor and the most important tangible goal in our program is to be standing here in the White House, with our Commander in Chief and all of you here today, proudly representing the United States Naval Academy, the entire brigade of Midshipmen, and all the men and women serving in our Navy and our Marine Corps, both past and present.

The young men here on the stage and some of them out here in the audience are some of the best and the brightest that our country has to offer.

In a little over a month, these 23 seniors, these incredible young men standing behind me, will graduate and commission as officers in the United States Navy and Marine Corps under your command, Mr. President, and they will do so with tremendous character and the core values of duty, honor, courage, and commitment.

I know there have been a lot of great teams—you mentioned some of those earlier—coming through here—collegiate, professional; world Champions, national champions—that have been honored here at the White House. But, Mr. President, this is your team. This is America's team. And the CIC Trophy is the most coveted and honorable trophy in all of college sports. And it's our objective to come back here and get to know you a little bit better over the course of your tenure. *[Laughter]*

At this time, we'd like to bring up our two captains, Daba Fofana and Colin Ramos, to present you, Mr. President, with a couple of nice gifts.

The President. Thank you very much.

Mr. Newberry. Thank you.

Thank you. Go Navy. Beat everyone.

[At this point, the President was presented with a team football and ring.]

The President. Wow. That's a beauty. *[Laughter]* That's fantastic.

Let me do this. Come on up. You guys here, come on over. Come on over, Coach.

Thank you very, very much. And we're going to bring the team and a few of your special friends down to the Oval Office.

Mr. Newberry. Yes, sir.

The President. And we're going to have some fun. So I'll see you down there in a minute. And I'll carry this with me, and I'll pretend I'm a great football player—*[inaudible]*. *[Laughter]* Okay?

Mr. Newberry. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you all very much. Great honor.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Roger Staubach, former quarterback, U.S. Naval Academy football team and National

Football League's Dallas Cowboys; and former President Joseph R. Biden Jr. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on April 16.

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Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Caine, J. Daniel; Davids, Yvette M.; Fofana, Daba; Gladchuk, Chester S., Jr.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Horvath, Blake; Kilby, James W.; Lane, Rayuan, III; Nauta, Walt; Newberry, Brian; Peele, Dashaun; Phelan, John C.; Ramos, Colin; Robinson, Landon; Spicer, Sean M.; Staubach, Roger; Vance, James D. "J.D.".

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