YOU are members of the Commissioning Class of the Rice Institute under the Navy Program for procuring officers from the various schools and colleges of the United States. You are ready to join the Naval Service as commissioned officers and take your places with your brother officers. No doubt many of you have wondered whether or not you would be able to enter the Service before the war ended. That question is now answered. There is no doubt but that you will. True enough, the war in Europe is acknowledged to be over, but there still remains the war in the Pacific which will be long, difficult, bitter, and costly. Costly in men, material, money, and time. Costly particularly to our young men who man the guns, wade in the mud, man the ships, and carry on all the grim, dirty work of war.

You are receiving your commissions at an opportune time and at a time when your services will be of particular value to your country, to be utilized in the continuing war in the Pacific. You have worked hard and you are now reaping the first fruits of your labor. The tree, however, is by no means stripped and there will be multiple opportunities ahead of you to continue your studies and your work and reap future benefits. These opportunities will enable you to continue your advancement, to take your rightful place in the Navy, or to go back into civilian life in your professions when the war is ended and peace comes to the world once more. You will no doubt be sent to all parts of the world where we have Naval activities. You will see countries and people that you
Address of Captain Leslie B. Marshall

have never seen before perhaps, and you will see war in all of its cruelty, danger, pain, suffering, and death. With all this, however, this start into a new world, you will have the aid and counsel of all of the men in every corps whose brains, skill, and courage are responsible for all the improvements, advancements, research, new construction, new ships, planes, and ships of every type that were not dreamed of some years ago. You will have the advice, aid, and counsel of the gallant fighting men who have fought the ships, planes, carriers, and submarines in which each officer competes with his brother officer in his daily work, ideas, his methods of handling men and equipment, and in various other ways. That way comes promotion in rank and greater responsibility as the ability of the individual develops, and all of the time, mind you, you are constantly under the supervision of your seniors, men who know the answers and act accordingly. Your career in the Navy depends on you and not on someone else, and the man who cannot pull his weight is dropped and by-passed.

It is a proud service and rightfully so, the one you are about to enter as commissioned officers. The history and the record of the United States Navy is one that is recognized and honored in all parts of the world where men gather to talk of duties, experiences, commanding officers, ships, stations, and the many and multiple details that make up a Naval officer's life. Our Navy is recognized as being the largest Navy that has ever existed in the history of the world. We have almost more ships of all types now than there were men in the Navy a few years ago. The Navy has come a long way since the days of John Paul Jones. These years have been of slow growth and development, of constant training, specialization, drill and battle practice, so that when the time came the Navy would be ready to
accomplish its mission, that of defending our country against an aggressor nation, and, as you know, this has been done in spite of the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor by a supposedly friendly nation and the terrible damage to our fleet. The Navy has played its rôle well and has been true to its traditions. Men have died that their ships might live and fight again another day. This, gentlemen, is the Service. Men die that their ships may live.

You are now about to receive your commissions as Ensigns in the United States Naval Reserve. You will have a responsibility of place, position, and career in the Navy. There will be times of bitter disappointment, times of trial, times of personal danger, and times perhaps when nothing seems worth while. There will never be much money. There will be constant moves; there will be hard, difficult work, but, for all, the reward is there and it will come as you prove yourselves. Your service in the Navy is no better than the service you give, and it is yours to make, mar, or break. The Navy offers you responsibility, hard work, and the opportunity to advance. It offers you an honorable career, and when your days of active duty are over and you are all Captains and Admirals, with your chests covered with ribbons, and you have grown old in a beloved Service, then, as the Honorable Winston Churchill has so aptly expressed it, "You will be put out to grass," to live your remaining years in peace, comfort, and security.

When you, in a few moments, place your shoulder marks on your shoulders, you have stepped into the ranks of the Commissioned Officers of the Navy. Let no act of yours, in any way, ever, bring discredit to the uniform you wear.

The Navy salutes you, honors you, and congratulates you upon the completion of this phase of your work and the winning of your commissions.

Leslie B. Marshall, Captain, M.C., U.S.N.