

October 28, 1940

[Fordham College]

FDR Speech File

INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT

Fordham College
New York, New York
October 28, 1940

(The text of these remarks was not released to the press.)

YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE ARCHBISHOP; MY FRIEND, THE RECTOR, AND MY
FRIENDS:

An old alumnus of yours is back again for the first time in a great many years; back again, very proud and happy to have the opportunity of reviewing this brigade -- battalion, I should say; I always get mixed up in military terms, being a mere Navy man -- this battalion of which I have heard so much. And I should like to come back again and see more of the work of the battalion and of the University.

I think the suggestion of the Rector, made to my mother about the sherry, would be very welcome on this cold afternoon, had I the time to accept his kind invitation. But I hope that, if he should ask me to spend the night, he would not ask me to sleep on George Washington's pillow.

I am glad to be here to say just one word to you young men who are members of the battalion:

You know of our great national preparedness program. You know why we are undertaking it, why we are undertaking this muster. I like to call it "muster" because it is an old word that goes back to the earliest colonial days of America, where every able-bodied man had an obligation to serve his community or his Colony in case of attack.

We have mustered a very large number of young men. We

have done it because, primarily, we want to have them trained in the things that are needed in the event of attack, because we feel that in their training we are safeguarding against possible attack the lives of all of the other men in America, the lives of all the women in America and of all the children. Therefore, this training to make you able to use these new facilities of warfare is to teach you how best to defend America. That is our great objective.

I am proud of your record of fifty years. I am glad to see you today, and I am especially happy to be here on this glorious day in October, at the beginning of your centenary. (Applause)
