

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on May 13, 2022

Location: Tan Auditorium, Gayle and Dan D’Aniello National Veterans Resource Center

Remarks: 2022 ROTC Commissioning Celebration

*The Chancellor was introduced by Vice Chancellor Mike Haynie*

Thank you, Vice Chancellor Haynie. Welcome All to the National Veterans Resource Center at the Daniel and Gayle D’Aniello Building. Welcome All to a University that remains committed to becoming the best University in the nation for veterans and military connected students.

This ceremony celebrates the 34 Army and Air Force Second Lieutenants who will be commissioned later today. They are graduating from three schools: Syracuse University, SUNY Polytechnic Institute and LeMoyne College.

I would like to thank the people who were instrumental in supporting and organizing this event.

* Lieutenant Colonel Jennifer Gotie
* Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Lippert
* Ron Novack, Executive Director of the Office of Veterans and Military Affairs
* The staff of the Office of Veteran and Military Affairs, including Laura Bates and Virginia O’Connor

Can you join me in thanking them?

We have with us today many supporters of our ROTC programs at Syracuse University, including many members of the Syracuse University Board of Trustees. Our University leaders have shown up today for a simple reason: we know at this university – we understand – how much work and commitment has been required from these about-to-be lieutenants – and from their families – to enable them to defend our country. To defend us.

Today, our all-volunteer Army and Air Force is drawn from a tiny percentage of our population. Less than one percent of our population has worn the uniform. And that one percent comes often repeatedly from the same families. Just to prove this to you today…

I now ask everyone present to stand today who comes from a family with two or more generations who have served. Please stand or wave if two generations in your family have served.

You have just seen as concrete a sign as I can give of the legacy of service these about-to-be lieutenants and their families have given this nation. Our nation.

This University and all its people are grateful to you and will always have your back.

Parents and family members here today: I have watched your sons and daughters here for the last four years as they earned their degrees. I watched them in physical training early in the mornings on campus. I watched them in class. I have watched them in marching order at Chancellor’s Reviews in the Dome.

I have watched them step up in countless ways to help our university remain open in person for the last two years – by volunteering to staff our COVID vaccination and testing sites, by collecting samples, doing lab transportation and providing the backbone of our logistics and COVID response. They got us through COVID safely and successfully.

Parents and families: I have raised three sons. I have taught more than 6,000 students at eight universities around the world. From that experience, I want to pay you my highest compliment as a parent: If I were ever in trouble or need. If my country were ever in trouble or need, there is no one I would rather have in my corner – no one I would rather have leading our enlisted men and women than your sons and daughters.

Parents and families: thank you for raising these amazing individuals. And thank you for sharing them with Syracuse University and our country.

The success of these soon-to-be lieutenants has been recognized far beyond the borders of our campus. Let me share a handful of extraordinary achievements of these 34 cadets.

Among our Army cadets:

* Eight are Distinguished Military Graduates.
* Two are commissioning in the top 10% of the Army’s year group 2022 Officers.
* This year’s class includes the first two Army cadets in University history to be selected for Special Operations Civil Affairs Assessment and Selection.
* One was selected for the "30 under 30" in Develops Others from the Center for Junior Officers; a distinction that only 2 Cadets nationwide received.
* And the second woman in SU Army ROTC history was selected to commission into the infantry.

Among our Air Force cadets:

* Two have earned Distinguished Graduate recognition. This means they are in the Top 10% of Air Force ROTC graduates nationwide.
* One was selected to become a Special Agent with the Office of Special Investigation. Only 21 individuals were selected nationwide.
* And one is currently being considered for the highly competitive Air Force Language Enabled Airman Program.

Will you all join me in a round of applause to acknowledge these achievements?

Now to all our cadets: as you leave Syracuse and begin your military careers, know how proud we are of you. You are the best. And, no matter where you are stationed, you will always have a home here at Syracuse.

Congratulations; thank you; and Godspeed.