

USNA Chapel Benediction Remarks by Russell Johnson, Oct. 22, 2017.

These remarks were offered as a prelude to Jerry's final blessing at '67's class memorial service. I had first thought to weave them into the sermon, as they too carried the theme of hope.....but it just didn't work. Someone wanted them, so I include them here. Thanks for giving me this great honor.

A few years ago at the Bands of Gold service held for the class of 2017, each of us who donated a ring had the chance to say a few words. After speaking about my ring, I said to those attending the event, that if they didn't remember anything else I had to say, I wanted them to remember this. And I said, "There will come a day in the future when you will feel all alone. It may be on a night cat launch, off a pitching deck, towards a target on a distant shore; or it might be on a deep reconnaissance mission as you are about to be inserted by helicopter into a hot zone. Or it might be many years from now, as you walk the halls of congress, facing a hard decision about this country, and you will feel all alone. But nothing could be further from the truth. For as long as one member of my class, the class of '67, is alive, we will be pulling for you, praying for you and trusting you to do the right thing, the best thing, for all of us.

And now I say to you my classmates, the sands of time **are** running out for us. And so there will come a day in the future when you will feel all alone. It may be before the last man is standing or it may be that **you are** the last man standing, and you will feel as though you are all alone.... but nothing could be further from the truth. For just there, just beyond your sight, waiting for you to come across..... we will be waiting there to greet you..... probably assigned to a committee appointed by Dave Church.... And the first question we will ask of you is....."Did we beat Army?"