

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, and fellow service members, Thank you all for gathering here today. I must admit, if you told me when I first enlisted that one day I'd be standing here speaking at my own retirement, I would have asked you to share whatever strong coffee you were drinking!

It's been quite a journey. I've worn these boots for longer than some of you have been alive. I've spent so much time in camouflage that half my neighborhood still thinks I'm a missing person. But today, I officially join the ranks of those who can sleep past 0500 without feeling guilty. I want to thank my family for their unwavering support. You've been my rock, even when I was off trying to be a hero at various international airports. Your love kept me grounded, even when I couldn't be on the ground.

To my colleagues, thank you for the memories. Who else would break out into impromptu push-up contests while waiting for a flight or turn MRE trading into an Olympic sport? Seriously, though, the bond we share is unparalleled, and your friendship has been invaluable.

As I hang up the uniform, I look forward to the next chapter. I plan to spend more time with my family, travel to places without needing to carry a rucksack, and perfect the art of mowing the lawn at a leisurely pace--no orders required.

In conclusion, thank you for this incredible ride. It's been an honor to serve alongside each of you. Now, let's get to some retirement cake before someone decides to suggest one last hike!

Thank you!