



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
THE CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
WASHINGTON, DC 20374-5088



December 1, 1992

Staff Support Activity

Dear Mr. Rosales:

In response to your telephone request to Dr. Edward Drea, we are enclosing information on the first officer's Oath of Enlistment, and the meaning and purpose of the oath.

We trust that this information will be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Trudie M. Eklund
Ms. Trudie M. Eklund
Historian, US Army Center
of Military History

The Oath of Enlistment

The first officer's oath was established in 1775 by the Articles of War under the Continental Congress. It read:

"I do acknowledge the thirteen United States of America, namely: New Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina, and Georgia, to be free, independent and sovereign states, and declare, that the people thereof owe no allegiance or obedience to George the Third, King of Great Britain, and I renounce, refuse and abjure any allegiance or obedience to him, and I do swear, that I will, to the utmost of my power, support, maintain and defend the said United States against said King, George the Third, and his heirs and successors, and his or their abettors, assistants and adherents; and will serve the said United States in the office of _____, which I now hold, and in any other office which I may hereafter hold by their appointment, or under their authority, with fidelity and honor, and according to the best of my skill and understanding. **So help me God.**"

The oath, while changed many times over the years, still maintains the continuity of a soldier's allegiance to his fellow countrymen, not to just one person or one ideology. Further it reaffirms a soldier's commitment to duty, service and sacrifice, the hallmarks of the profession of arms.

Further, the oath reflects the strengths of our nation--that we are a nation of laws, **that we espouse certain religious values**, that our institutions support our people, and that selfless service in our nation's behalf is an exercise of our birthright.

Regardless of uniform, creed, race, religion, or sex, we are all bound together in a brotherhood of service to the nation, as were those who served before us. The oath remains a statement of the highest ideals of a government of free people.