

Duckworth addresses cadets at Northern Illinois University's ROTC Commissioning Ceremony

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DEKALB, — Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) addressed Northern Illinois University's (NIU) ROTC Battalion Commissioning Ceremony today as eight cadets took the oath to become U.S. Army officers. Duckworth, an alumna of NIU's ROTC program, highlighted the need to improve care and support for American servicemembers and Veterans. Audio of her speech is available [here](#), a video clip is available [here](#) and a photo of the event is available [here](#).

“It's an honor to be a part of NIU's ROTC commissioning ceremony as these cadets begin their journey as the next generation of Army officers,” said Senator Duckworth. “I'm grateful for the time I spent in NIU's ROTC program and I'm proud to go to work every single day in the Senate to make sure our nation's military men and women receive the support they have earned.”

Today's ceremony included the commissioning of Second Lt. Ally Lehman, NIU star basketball player and one of just 10 women selected nationally for the infantry in 2017. This year, only about 1 in 500 infantrymen are women.

Duckworth, a Purple Heart recipient, completed NIU's ROTC program in May of 1992 and went on to serve in the Reserve Forces for 23 years. She retired from military service in 2014 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.