

WHAT SO ★ PROUDLY ★ WE HAIL

The American Soul in Story, Speech, and Song

Oath of Enlistment

Oaths of enlistment go as far back as June 14, 1775 when the Continental Congress created the first oath for enlistment in the Continental Army. The oath was revised in 1776, again in 1789, and in 1960 for the final time. Federal statute requires that each new enlistee recites the oath of enlistment ([10 U.S.C. § 502](#)).

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Each branch of the Armed Forces recites the same oath, except the National Guard (both Army and Air). The statute outlines both the language of the oath itself and who may administer it. The oath may be taken before the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense, any commissioned officer, or any other person designated under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

What duties or responsibilities does a member of the Armed Forces affirm with this oath? What is the import of these various duties? To whom or what must a service member swear allegiance and obedience? Why is such an oath necessary? How does this statement define military service for those who take it? Would you be prepared to follow through on this oath?

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.