

**REMARKS
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(INSTALLATIONS & ENVIRONMENT)
MT AIRY MD
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GOOD MORNING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS MEMORIAL DAY, OUR MOST SOLEMN NATIONAL HOLIDAY, AS WE REFLECT ON THE HONORABLE AND SELFLESS SERVICE OF THOSE DEPARTED WHO HAVE SO NOBLY SERVED OUR NATION IN THE UNIFORMS OF OUR ARMED FORCES. IN OUR AUDIENCE WE ALSO GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE VETERANS WHO COURAGEOUSLY SERVED DURING OUR COUNTRIES CONFLICTS OF THE LAST 60 YEARS: WORLD WAR II, KOREA, VIETNAM, THE COLD WAR, DESERT STORM, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM AND OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, NOT TO MENTION THE CAMPAIGNS AND OPERATIONS THAT PUT OUR ARMED

**FORCES IN HARMS WAY IN CENTRAL AMERICA, AFRICA,
THE MIDDLE EAST, ASIA AND THE BALKANS.**

**IN HIS MEMORIAL DAY ADDRESS IN 1884, OLIVER
WENDELL HOLMES JR. LAMENTED THE QUESTION:
“SHOULD WE STILL CELEBRATE MEMORIAL DAY?”
ADDRESSING HIS AUDIENCE LESS THAN 20 YEARS AFTER
THE CIVIL WAR HE FELT THEY SURELY KNEW THE
REASON FOR MEMORIAL DAY, BUT HE WAS CONCERNED
THAT MUCH OF THE NATION DIDN'T. HERE TODAY WE
GATHER 120 YEARS LATER, AND WE CAN ASK
OURSELVES -- “WHY DOESN'T MEMORIAL DAY SEEM TO
MEAN WHAT IT ONCE DID?” MEMORIAL DAY SHOULD BE A
TIME FOR ALL AMERICANS TO PAUSE AND RECONNECT
WITH THEIR HISTORY AND NATIONAL VALUES BY
HONORING THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THE
IDEALS THAT MAKE US AMERICANS. YOU ARE DOING AN
IMPORTANT THING, MAKING A DIFFERENCE, BY BEING**

HERE TODAY. YOU ARE NOT FORGETTING THE SACRIFICES OF OUR SERVICE MEMBERS.

THE LATE HISTORIAN, DAVID BOORSTIN, ONCE SAID, "TO DISREGARD THE PAST IN FACING PRESENT CHALLENGES IS LIKE PLANTING CUT FLOWERS." AS I LOOK AT YOU WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN THE AUDIENCE AND THINK OF THE MAGNIFICENT MEMORIAL BEING DEDICATED THIS WEEKEND ON THE NATIONAL MALL, I THINK OF THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THAT TIME AND TODAY.

ON DECEMBER 7TH, 1941, THE DAY THAT "WILL LIVE IN INFAMY," AFTER THE SURPRISE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR AND HICKAM FIELD, PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT RALLIED AMERICANS BY REMINDING THEM THAT "THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS SECURITY FOR ANY NATION - OR ANY INDIVIDUAL - IN A WORLD RULED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF GANGSTERISM." AMERICANS RESPONDED THE VERY NEXT DAY BY FLOCKING TO RECRUITING STATIONS BY

THE TENS OF THOUSANDS. AMERICA'S WORKFORCE, SWELLED BY THE ENTRANCE OF MILLIONS OF WOMEN, AND WE KICKED AMERICA'S ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY INTO HIGH GEAR WITHIN JUST A FEW MONTHS. IN THE JUNGLES OF GUADALCANAL, ON THE DESERT PLAINS OF NORTH AFRICA, AND ON THE HIGH BLUFFS OF NORMANDY, AMERICA'S ARMED FORCES MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE SO THEIR CHILDREN COULD LIVE IN A WORLD RULED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM. IN THE WAKE OF THE TERRORIST ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11TH, AMERICANS ONCE AGAIN HEARD THE CALL. THE CALL WENT OUT FROM GRIEVING RELATIVES WHOSE LOVED ONES HAD DIED IN THE COLLAPSE OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER. IT WAS HEARD FROM MOTHERS AND FATHERS WHOSE SONS AND DAUGHTERS HAD PERISHED IN THE ATTACK ON THE PENTAGON, INCLUDING MOUNT AIRY'S OWN CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER (RETIRED), BILL RUTH (G-1, HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY).

IT EMANATED FROM HUSBANDS WHOSE WIVES HAD DIED ABOARD A CIVILIAN AIRLINER IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA. PRESIDENT BUSH ECHOED THE CALL WHEN HE PROCLAIMED SEPTEMBER 11TH AS "A DAY WHEN ALL AMERICANS FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE UNITE IN OUR RESOLVE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE." HE ALSO TOLD US THAT "TERRORIST ATTACKS CAN SHAKE THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR BIGGEST BUILDINGS, BUT THEY CANNOT TOUCH THE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA." AMERICANS UNITED. AMERICA'S ARMED FORCES ANSWERED THE CALL IN AFGHANISTAN, ON THE PLAINS OF KANDAHAR AND IN THE CAVE COMPLEX OF TORA BORA. AMERICA'S SONS AND DAUGHTERS WERE CALLED UPON TO FIGHT A HIDDEN ENEMY FAR AWAY FROM HOME. THEY OPERATED DEEP IN A LANDLOCKED COUNTRY, SURROUNDED BY SOME OF THE HARSHTEST TERRAIN ON THE PLANET. AGAINST AN ENTRENCHED FOE, AMERICAN FORCES ACHIEVED DECISIVE VICTORY IN A SHORT TIME.

TOGETHER WITH AFGHANI TRIBESMAN WHO RESISTED THE BARBARISM OF THE TALIBAN AND AL QAEDA, OUR ARMED FORCES ENGAGED AND DECIMATED THOSE FACTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11TH. TODAY, THE LIGHT OF FREEDOM SHINES FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THAT ANCIENT LAND. UNDER ITS NEW CONSTITUTION, ALL CITIZENS NOW ENJOY THE RIGHT TO VOTE. GIRLS WHO WERE FORBIDDEN TO RECEIVE EDUCATION NOW FLOCK TO SCHOOLS BUILT BY OUR SOLDIERS, AND A NEW AFGHAN ARMY IS STANDING UP.

TODAY, WE REMEMBER THE SACRIFICES THAT AMERICANS HAVE MADE WORLDWIDE IN ANSWERING THE CALL OF FREEDOM. BUT WE MUST ALSO BE MINDFUL OF HOW OUR ARMED SERVICES HAVE FURTHERED THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY HERE AT HOME. BULLETS DO NOT DISCRIMINATE, AND NO RACE, CREED OR COLOR HAS A MONOPOLY ON COURAGE. IF YOU VISIT

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, YOU WILL SEE THE GRAVES OF TUSKEGEE AIRMEN LYING NOT FAR FROM THOSE OF THE GRANDSONS OF FORMER SLAVE OWNERS. OUR ARMED FORCES WERE THE FIRST AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS TO FULLY INTEGRATE, THE FIRST TO FULLY BENEFIT FROM THE TALENTS OF ALL AMERICANS. OUR UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS AS A DIVERSIFIED FIGHTING FORCE STANDS AS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF THE BEST THIS NATION HAS TO OFFER.

ONE OF THOSE SHINING EXAMPLES IS PRIVATE FIRST CLASS LORI PIESTEWA, A NATIVE AMERICAN WHO SERVED WITH THE 507TH MAINTENANCE COMPANY IN IRAQ. ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 23, 2003, HER COLUMN CAME UNDER HEAVY FIRE NEAR NASIRYAH. PRIVATE PIESTEWA WAS CAPTURED AND DIED SOON AFTERWARDS FROM WOUNDS SUSTAINED FROM A GRENADE ATTACK. LORI PIESTEWA IS PART OF A PROUD TRADITION OF NATIVE AMERICANS WHO HAVE SERVED

**AMERICA IN HER DARKEST HOURS. IN THE SECOND
WORLD WAR, THEY BECAME THE FAMOUS CODE
TALKERS OF THE PACIFIC. ONE SENIOR SIGNALS OFFICER
ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE ISLAND FORTRESS OF IWO
JIMA COULD NOT HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT THEM.
TODAY, OVER 12,000 NATIVE-AMERICANS SERVE IN
AMERICA'S ARMED FORCES. THEY RANK AMONG OUR
BEST AND BRIGHTEST SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN, AND
MARINES. AND OF PFC LORI PIESTEWA, SENATOR TOM
DASCHLE HAD THIS TO SAY: "THIS PERSON LOVED THIS
NATION. SHE RISKED EVERYTHING TO PROTECT HER
LAND AND HER PEOPLE." TODAY, THOUSANDS OF
YOUNG PEOPLE ANSWER THE CALL FROM EVERY STATE
AND EVERY TERRITORY OF THIS GREAT NATION. THEY
COME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. THEY REPRESENT OUR
BEST AND OUR BRIGHTEST. THEY ARE PATRIOTIC TO THE
CORE; THEY ALL RECOGNIZE THE SPECIAL MISSION
THEIR COUNTRY HAS ENTRUSTED TO THEM. TODAY'S**

ARMY, IN THE MIDST OF TRANSFORMATION, IS CHANGING THE WAY IT DOES BUSINESS TO BECOME A MORE FLEXIBLE, POWERFUL, AND RESPONSIVE ORGANIZATION. BUT ONE THING NEVER NEEDING TO TRANSFORM, IS THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIER. AND IT SHOWS – IT ALWAYS HAS. OUR SOLDIERS PERSONIFY THE VALUES OF LOYALTY, DUTY, RESPECT, SELFLESS-SERVICE, HONOR, INTEGRITY AND PERSONAL COURAGE. THEY ALSO ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE SPECIAL RISKS THEY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO TAKE, JUST LIKE EVERY OTHER GENERATION OF AMERICANS. BUT WITHOUT A DOUBT, THEY ARE THE BEST-EDUCATED, BEST EQUIPPED, AND BEST-TRAINED SOLDIERS THIS NATION HAS EVER PRODUCED. AND I BELIEVE THEY ARE ALSO THE MOST PROFESSIONAL.

WE SAW PROOF OF THAT PROFESSIONALISM IN IRAQ, IN SOLDIERS LIKE ARMY STAFF SGT. MATT HAYDEN. HAYDEN, WITH HIS RHODE ISLAND NATIONAL GUARD

UNIT, WAS COMING OUT OF THE FALLUJAH POLICE STATION WHEN TERRORISTS OPENED FIRE. A GRENADE EXPLODED CLOSE TO HIM, WOUNDING HIM IN THE HAND, KNEE, AND TEARING AWAY PART OF THE STEEL PLATE IN THE BACK OF HIS BODY ARMOR. AFTER FOUR SURGERIES, AND REHABILITATION, HAYDEN REJOINED HIS UNIT. HE SAID "I PROBABLY COULD HAVE STAYED IN RHODE ISLAND AFTER I HAD FINISHED MY CONVALESCENT LEAVE ... BUT I HAD TO GET BACK TO MY UNIT AND MY GUYS." HAYDEN PERSONIFIES THE ARMY VALUES OF LOYALTY AND SELFLESS SERVICE. DURING OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, EMBEDDED REPORTERS WERE GIVEN ALMOST UNPRECEDENTED ACCESS TO OUR FORWARD DEPLOYED UNITS. THEY WERE GIVEN THAT LEVEL OF ACCESS BECAUSE OF THE TRUST THIS NATION HAS IN THE CONDUCT OF ITS ARMY. THOSE REPORTERS SAW FIRST-HAND HOW BATTLE-READY OUR UNITS WERE, AND HOW WILLING THEY WERE TO ENDURE HARDSHIP

AND ADVERSITY. BUT THEY ALSO SAW HOW CAREFULLY OUR SOLDIERS SHOWED COMPASSION IN THE HEAT OF COMBAT. RESPECT FOR CIVILIANS AND THEIR PROPERTY HAS BECOME A HALLMARK OF OUR MILITARY TRADITION. I KNOW THAT MEMORIAL DAY SIGNALS THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER. MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WILL CELEBRATE THIS WEEKEND WITH BACKYARD BARBECUES AND PICNICS IN THE PARK. MILLIONS MORE WILL JOURNEY TO THE MOUNTAINS OR TO THE SEASIDE TO RELAX WITH THEIR FAMILIES. THERE, THEY WILL ALL ENJOY THE BLESSINGS OF PEACE AND LIBERTY IN A COUNTRY THAT ENSHRINES THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL. AND THAT IS EXACTLY THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

EVERY MEMORIAL DAY IS SIGNIFICANT, BUT THIS YEAR'S HOLIDAY RAISES THE LEVEL OF REMEMBRANCE WITH THE DEDICATION OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THOUSANDS HAVE ALREADY PASSED THROUGH THE LANDMARK SINCE IT

OPENED IN LATE APRIL, HONORING MORE THAN 400,000 AMERICAN SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN, MARINES AND OTHERS WHO DIED – AS WELL AS THE 16 MILLION MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED IN UNIFORM, AND COUNTLESS MORE WHO SUPPORTED THEM BACK HOME. SUPPORT OF OUR ARMED FORCES REMAINS STRONG, TODAY. THAT SUPPORT IS A FORCE UNTO ITSELF -- AN INTANGIBLE BUT PRICELESS RESOURCE THAT NEVER FAILS TO ENERGIZE OUR SOLDIERS. EACH OF US TAKES A STAND AGAINST TERRORISM WHEN WE SHOW THE WORLD OUR UNWAVERING SUPPORT OF AMERICAN FORCES.

JUST AS THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL TESTIFIES TO THE SPIRIT AND SACRIFICE OF WHAT IS POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE GREATEST GENERATION, EACH DAY OF THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM IS A TESTAMENT TO THE SELFLESS SERVICE OF TODAY'S FIGHTING FORCES. THIS GENERATION OF SOLDIERS HONORS THE LEGACY OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT AND SACRIFICED FOR OUR

NATION BY FOLLOWING THEIR EXAMPLE OF PERSONAL COURAGE. THEY PLACE THE MISSION FIRST, THEY NEVER ACCEPT DEFEAT, THEY NEVER QUIT, AND THEY WILL NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE BEHIND. THIS WARRIOR SPIRIT CARRIES THEM ONWARD, CONTINUALLY STRENGTHENING THEIR RESOLVE TO FIGHT THOSE WHO THREATEN OUR FREEDOM. JUST AS WORLD WAR II SOLDIERS FACED A LONG, HARD ROAD TO VICTORY OVER TYRANNY, TODAY'S SOLDIERS ARE JUST AS DETERMINED TO DEFEAT TERRORISM.

THIS IS A TIME TO REMEMBER, BUT IT IS ALSO A TIME TO REFLECT ON THE GRATITUDE WE FEEL FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM PROTECTING OUR NATION AND OUR FREEDOM. BE GENEROUS IN EXPRESSING THIS APPRECIATION THE NEXT TIME YOU MEET A SOLDIER. MEDALS AND AWARDS ARE GIVEN TO SOME, BUT A SIMPLE AND HEARTFELT 'THANK YOU' IS EARNED BY ALL WHO SERVE, AND HAVE SERVED, OUR COUNTRY. AND AS

WE CONTEMPLATE THE SACRIFICE OF THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO SECURE OUR WAY OF LIFE, LET US NOT FORGET THE TRUE MEANING OF THIS HOLIDAY. FOR A TERRIBLE PRICE IN BLOOD HAS BEEN PAID TO SECURE THAT WAY OF LIFE FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS. THE WORDS OF FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT ARE AS TRUE TODAY AS THEY WERE IN 1936: THAT "FREEDOM CANNOT BE BESTOWED, IT MUST BE ACHIEVED." UNTIL THE DAY WHEN THE WORLD IS FREE FROM TYRANNY, OUR FREEDOM WILL BE ACHIEVED ONLY IF AMERICANS ARE WILLING TO ANSWER THE CALL -- TO PROVE THEMSELVES WORTHY TO BE FREE. THE BRAVE SOULS WE COMMEMORATE TODAY PROVED THEIR WORTH. IN WHATEVER CAPACITY IN WHICH WE SERVE, MAY WE ALL DO THE SAME.

I WOULD LIKE TO FINISH WITH THE WORDS THAT APPEAR ON A MEMORIAL WITHIN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY. NOTHING SPEAKS HIGHER TO THE MEMORY

OF FALLEN AMERICANS THAN THESE: "NOT FOR FAME OR REWARD, NOT FOR PLACE OR RANK, NOT LURED BY AMBITION OR GOADED BY NECESSITY, BUT IN SIMPLE OBEDIENCE TO DUTY AS THEY UNDERSTOOD IT, THESE MEN SUFFERED ALL, SACRIFICED ALL, DARED ALL AND DIED."

MAY GOD BLESS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU, OUR COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS AMERICA. THANK YOU