

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY
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11 NOVEMBER 2021

AT
PLAIN TOWNSHIP, STARK COUNTY, OHIO

GOOD AFTERNOON ...

- OR AS WE GREET EACH OTHER AT WALSH UNIVERSITY
 - **SWORDS UP!**

THANK YOU FOR THE KIND INVITATION TO BE HERE WITH
YOU TODAY ... AND TO THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND
THE ORGANIZERS WHO PUT THIS GREAT EVENT TOGETHER
... I THINK I CAN SPEAK ON BEHALF OF ALL THE VETERANS
IN THANKING YOU FOR REMEMBERING AND FOR THE
GENEROSITY.

WE ARE ALL HUMBLLED.

THANK YOU TO MISSION BBQ ... OUR COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDS YOUR COMMITMENT TO VETERANS, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND THE MILITARY COMMUNITY AND WE ARE APPRECIATIVE OF YOU!

TO OUR FIREFIGHTERS HERE AT THE STATION ... THANK YOU FOR LETTING US CRASH THE FIREHOUSE

AND OF COURSE, TO THE GOOD LORD ... I THINK THIS IS THE KIND OF WEATHER OHIO NEEDS EVERY NOVEMBER.

SO, THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE GORGEOUS DAY AND THIS TIME TO BE TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY.

WE GATHER TODAY TO MARK VETERANS DAY.

WE COME TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY TO THANK THOSE
MEN AND WOMEN – THOSE WHO ARE ALIVE AS WELL AS
THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED ON TO ETERNAL LIFE – FOR
THEIR COMMITMENT TO STANDING UP AND DEFENDING
OUR GREAT NATION.

WOULD ALL THE VETERANS HERE WITH US TODAY PLEASE
STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

WOULD ALL THE FAMILIES OF A VETERAN HERE WITH US
TODAY PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

WOULD ANY ACTIVE DUTY, RESERVIST, OR GUARDSMAN
CURRENTLY SERVING PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED?

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: THOSE ARE THE FACES OF TRUE AMERICAN HEROES.

THE AMERICAN VETERAN COMES FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE ... EVERY FAITH TRADITION ... EVERY RACE AND ETHNICITY ... FROM THE RURAL FARMS OF OHIO AND THE URBAN COASTAL CITIES OF CALIFORNIA ... AND THEY SERVE IN A WIDE VARIETY OF ROLES IN OUR ARMED FORCES ... YET, THEY ALL SHARE ONE THING IN COMMON

- THEY SERVE **YOU**.

TODAY, OUR NATION STANDS AT AN HISTORICAL INFLECTION POINT – MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT THIS.

WE ARE A DEEPLY DIVIDED NATION THAT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNTETHERED FROM OUR FOUNDATION ... WE ARE UNSETTLED ... NONETHELESS, TODAY WE NEED TO COME TOGETHER AND SET THAT ALL ASIDE AND REFLECT

ON THIS GIFT OUR VETERANS HAVE GIVEN US: THE GIFT OF FREEDOM.

- OUR FREEDOM TO HOLD DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW
- OUR FREEDOM TO TRAVEL DIFFERENT PATHS ON OUR JOURNEYS OF LIFE
- OUR FREEDOM TO LIVE OUT OUR OWN LIFE'S PURPOSE

WE ALSO KNOW THAT THIS HAS NOT BEEN “FREE” ... IT HAS BEEN PURCHASED AND EARNED WITH COURAGE, STRENGTH, AND LEADERSHIP.

THESE THREE TRAITS ARE WHAT AMERICA VALUES – THEY HAVE BEEN SHARED FOR 245 YEARS WITH EACH SUCCESSIVE GENERATION.

THE VETERANS OF THE PAST HAVE BOUGHT THE FREEDOM WE ENJOY TODAY ... AND THAT, TOO, HAS BEEN SHARED FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT.

ON NOVEMBER 19, 1863 ... 158 YEARS AGO ... ABRAHAM
LINCOLN STOOD ON THE BATTLEFIELD AT GETTYSBURG. IN
PART, HE SAID:

- *“BUT, IN A LARGER SENSE, WE CANNOT DEDICATE—WE
CANNOT CONSECRATE—WE CANNOT HALLOW—THIS
GROUND. THE BRAVE MEN, LIVING AND DEAD, WHO
STRUGGLED HERE, HAVE CONSECRATED IT FAR ABOVE
OUR POOR POWER TO ADD OR DETRACT. THE WORLD
WILL LITTLE NOTE NOR LONG REMEMBER WHAT WE SAY
HERE, BUT IT CAN NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY DID HERE.
IT IS FOR US, THE LIVING, RATHER TO BE DEDICATED
HERE TO THE UNFINISHED WORK WHICH THEY WHO
FOUGHT HERE HAVE THUS FAR SO NOBLY ADVANCED. IT
IS RATHER FOR US TO BE HERE DEDICATED TO THE
GREAT TASK REMAINING BEFORE US—THAT FROM THESE
HONORED DEAD WE TAKE INCREASED DEVOTION TO
THAT CAUSE TO WHICH THEY GAVE THE LAST FULL
MEASURE OF DEVOTION; THAT WE HERE HIGHLY*

RESOLVE THAT THESE DEAD SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN; THAT THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM; AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH.”

THAT WAS PRESIDENT LINCOLN’S WAY OF SAYING WHAT EACH VETERAN HAS DONE OR IS DOING:

- PERFORMING PUBLIC SERVICE
- FOR THE GOOD OF THE NATION
- TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY.
- AND OUR NATION NEEDED THEM YESTERDAY
 - NEEDS THEM TODAY
 - AND WILL ALWAYS NEED THEM TOMORROW.

WHAT THEY DO AND HAVE DONE IS TRULY UNIQUE.

- THINK ABOUT DOCTORS ... THEY PROTECT WHAT WE
VALUE: LIFE
- THEN WE HAVE JUDGES ... THEY PRESERVE A HIGHER
CAUSE: JUSTICE
- BUT OUR VETERANS ... THEY HAVE THE MOST NOBLE
OF CAUSES: TO DEFEND AND POSSIBLY DIE FOR IDEALS
AND INSTITUTIONS.

YES, EVERYDAY ... THEIR PRESENCE IN A UNIFORM OR
STANDING NEXT TO SOMEONE IN THEIR UNIFORM STRIKES
A BLOW THAT IS FOR FREEDOM.

THESE VETERANS STAND FOR THE VERY ESSENCE OF
JUSTICE ... AND THEIR VERY PRESENCE SPEAKS TO THOSE
THAT WOULD DO US HARM.

FOR JUST A MOMENT, COME ON A SHORT WALK WITH ME TO WASHINGTON DC ... LET'S VISIT TWO OF OUR NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND AS WE DO LET'S INTENTIONALLY THINK ABOUT OUR VETERANS.

WE APPROACH THE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL ... A BEAUTIFUL WHITE NEOCLASSICAL STRUCTURE MADE OF VERMONT IMPERIAL DANBY MARBLE SITTING ON THE SHORE OF THE POTOMAC RIVER THAT WAS COMPLETED IN 1943.

AS WE STEP INSIDE, WE FIND STONework THAT SYMBOLIZES THE GEOGRAPHIC EXTREMES OF THE ORIGINAL 13 STATES FROM NEW ENGLAND TO THE DEEP SOUTH.

FLOOR MARBLE FROM TENNESSEE ... INNER DOME LIMESTONE FROM INDIANA.

WE WALK YOU OVER AND SEE A PASSAGE FROM THE
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE CARVED INTO ITS
CURVED WALL MADE OF WHITE GEORGIA MARBLE.

- FOR OUR VETERANS HERE TODAY, YOU WILL LIKELY
SHARE ITS SENTIMENT.
 - "AND FOR THE SUPPORT OF THIS DECLARATION,"
JEFFERSON WROTE, "... WE MUTUALLY PLEDGE
OUR LIVES, OUR FORTUNES, AND OUR SACRED
HONOR."

NOW DON'T MOVE ... LET'S **LOOK STRAIGHT UP!**

ABOVE THE TOWERING 19 FOOT BRONZE STATUE OF
JEFFERSON SITTING ATOP A LARGE BLOCK OF MINNESOTA
GRANITE SURROUNDED BY A GRAY MISSOURI MARBLE
RING AT ITS BASE, DO YOU SEE IN 2-FOOT-HIGH LETTERS ON
THE BASE OF THE MONUMENT'S DOME, THE INSCRIPTION:

- "I HAVE SWORN UPON THE ALTAR OF GOD
ETERNAL HOSTILITY AGAINST EVERY FORM OF
TYRANNY OVER THE MIND OF MAN"?

HERE, YOU READ WHAT SERVES AS OUR FOUNDATION, OUR
FABRIC, AND OUR TRUTH: WE ARE A NATION THAT

- "... HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT,
THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY
ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN
UNALIENABLE RIGHTS."

LIKE GEORGE WASHINGTON ... LIKE THOMAS JEFFERSON ...
LIKE JAMES MADISON ... LIKE CHARLES CARROLL ... LIKE
EVERYONE OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS:

- AMERICANS OF EVERY GENERATION ARE READY
TO FIGHT AND DIE FOR THOSE UNALIENABLE
RIGHTS.

LEAVING THE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL, TO HELP “COME ALIVE” THE COMMITMENT AND THE SACRIFICES AMERICANS ARE WILLING TO ENDURE, LET’S TAKE A WALK DOWN THE MALL AND UP TO LINCOLN’S MEMORIAL.

AS WE APPROACH THAT 200-FOOT-WIDE MARBLE AND LIMESTONE BUILDING THAT STANDS 99 FEET TALL WITH 44 COLUMNS ACROSS, WE SEE ANOTHER 19-FOOT-TALL STATUE, THIS ONE CARVED OUT OF 28 BLOCKS OF GEORGIA MARBLE, THAT ALSO DOMINATES THE INTERIOR.

WE STEP INSIDE AND IMMEDIATELY SEE THAT WORDS FROM THAT GETTYSBURG SPEECH ETCHED IN MARBLE.

WE WALK AROUND AND READ ON THE WALLS HIS FINAL THOUGHTS FROM HIS SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS ON MARCH 4, 1865 ... ONLY 41 DAYS BEFORE HIS OWN SACRIFICE OF A LIFE TAKEN BY AN ASSASSIN’S BULLET:

- "WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE; WITH CHARITY FOR ALL; WITH FIRMNESS IN THE RIGHT, AS GOD GIVES US TO SEE THE RIGHT, LET US STRIVE ON TO FINISH THE WORK WE ARE IN; TO BIND UP THE NATION'S WOUNDS; TO CARE FOR HIM WHO SHALL HAVE BORNE THE BATTLE, AND FOR HIS WIDOW, AND HIS ORPHAN..."

ON OUR RETURN TRIP HOME, WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A LINGERING QUESTION ABOUT OUR VETERANS:

- ***WHO*** DOES SERVE IN OUR MILITARY?

THEY ARE THE MEN AND WOMEN THAT RECOGNIZE THAT CITIZENSHIP CARRIES WITH IT RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS – NOT JUST FREEDOMS AND PRIVILEGES.

SO, IT IS FITTING THAT TODAY WE PAUSE TO REMEMBER AND THANK THESE AMERICAN HEROES – MEN AND WOMEN

FROM ALL WALKS OF AMERICAN LIFE WHO SET ASIDE ALL
OTHER PURSUITS TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY – YOUR
COUNTRY – MY COUNTRY.

WE ALSO TAKE TIME, TODAY, AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT
NATION TO ENJOY FREEDOM AND TO REMEMBER THOSE
THAT GAVE UP LIFE FOR THAT FREEDOM.

AND WE DO THAT EVERY TIME WE REFLECT ON THE SINGLE
MOST IMPORTANT SYMBOL OF OUR NATION AND OUR
COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMON GOOD:
OLD GLORY.

THAT FLAG – SHE MEANS EVERYTHING TO OUR VETERANS
AND THOSE THAT ASSERT OTHERWISE ONLY
DEMONSTRATE THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND NEITHER ITS
MEANING NOR ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN OUR AMERICAN
HISTORY.

- FOR RECALL THAT RED SYMBOLIZES VALOR
- WHITE SYMBOLIZES PURITY
- AND BLUE SYMBOLIZES PERSEVERANCE AND JUSTICE.

THIS SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO “WHO” THESE PEOPLE ARE AND “WHAT” THEY FOUGHT FOR.

THESE HEROES – STANDING WATCH EVEN AT THIS VERY MOMENT – AWAY FROM HOME AND FAMILY – OFTEN COLD AND HUNGRY – AROUND THE GLOBE – UNDERSTAND WHY THEY SERVE OR WHY THEY HAVE SERVED.

[TELL STORY]

[CLOSEOUT WITH OFFERING ...]

- SOMEONE WHO HAS A *WHY* TO LIVE CAN BEAR
ALMOST ANY *HOW* TO LIVE.

SO TODAY ... AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY FAMILY WITH
THOSE SERVING AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE RETURNED
HOME FROM SERVING ... WE SHOULD ENJOY OUR FREEDOM
AND ALSO REMEMBER TO OPEN OUR HEARTS WITH A DEEP
AND ABIDING SENSE OF GRATITUDE BY ...

- PERHAPS SAYING “THANK YOU FOR YOUR
SERVICE” TO A VET;
- OR, FLY AN AMERICAN FLAG IN YOUR YARD;
- OR, BETTER YET:
 - ***MAKE YOUR LIFE WORTH DYING FOR***
 - SEEK TO BE WORTHY OF THAT SACRIFICE

LET OUR VETERANS KNOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THAT
THEIR SACRIFICE WAS WORTH IT ALL.

I CLOSE WITH A POWERFUL REMINDER OF THE
ATTITUDE SO MANY AMERICANS HAVE ADOPTED IN THEIR
MILITARY SERVICE ...

- COMING FROM WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF
ISAIAH
 - THEN I HEARD THE LORD ASKING ... “WHOM
SHALL I SEND AS A MESSENGER TO MY
PEOPLE? WHO WILL GO?”
 - **“LORD, I’LL GO! SEND *ME!*”**

GOD BLESS OUR TROOPS

GOD BLESS OUR VETERANS

GOD BLESS AMERICA