

The original documents are located in Box 135, folder “Aug. 8, 1974 - Speech, Posthumous Medal of Honor Ceremony, Blair House” of the Gerald R. Ford Vice Presidential Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD
POSTHUMOUS MEDAL OF HONOR CEREMONY
BLAIR HOUSE, AUGUST 8, 1974

FOR RELEASE AT 10:00 A.M. THURSDAY

April 19th of 1975 will mark the two hundredth anniversary of those historic events that occurred at Concord Bridge in 1775.

There -- on that day -- the shot was fired heard around the world. The echoes of that shot fired in the Eighteenth Century are heard today in the Twentieth.

That sound began the American Revolution, and the curtain was raised on a new dimension of individual freedom and human rights best expressed in that immortal document signed at Philadelphia a little over a year later.

The pledge and the promise of the Declaration of Independence would be kept and redeemed in the bitter war years that would end in victory at Yorktown in 1781.

The life, the liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for succeeding generations of Americans were attained by men who would die at Valley Forge and dozens of battlefields in the thirteen colonies as the Continental Army would march the long road to Yorktown. Other men would lose their liberty and endure the suffering of prison camps in that war. This was their gift -- their life -- their liberty, that we might pursue happiness.

We are the beneficiaries of the pledge they made in the closing lines of the Declaration of Independence:

"And for the support of this declaration, with a firm
Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we
mutually pledge to each other our lives, our Fortunes,
and our Sacred Honor."

We read in Scripture that "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

This kind of sacrifice has often been the story of the Medal of Honor, and it is the meaning of this ceremony today.

We honor seven men who -- in their acts of heroism and sacrifice -- displayed an uncommon valor which we recognize by the presentation posthumously of

our Nation's highest award, an award authorized by the Congress of the United States during the American Civil War and which I present today on behalf of the Congress and the President of the United States.

Since Concord Bridge, American fighting men have demonstrated valor and rendered sacrifice for this Republic in the far-flung corners of this earth -- in the seas that encircle it -- and in skies above it.

To the members of the family this piece of blue ribbon and medallion are the tangible symbols of this Nation's gratitude.

In closing, may I leave with you the thought of the last verse of the song "America" which is a prayer:

"Our Father's God, to Thee,
Author of Liberty,
To Thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light,
Protect us by Thy might
Great God, our King."

This is our prayer of gratitude to those whose memory and deeds we honor today.

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