

The original documents are located in Box 9, folder “5/26/75 - Arlington Cemetery Wreath Laying” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.. *js*

ARLINGTON CEMETERY WREATH LAYING

MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 26, 1975

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THERE IS NO HIGHER OR MORE SOLEMN PRIVILEGE THAN
TO REPRESENT A GRATEFUL NATION IN PAYING TRIBUTE TO ITS HONORED
DEAD. NO MAN OR WOMAN WHO COMES TO ARLINGTON ON MEMORIAL
DAY CAN HELP BUT FEEL THE BURDEN AND THE PRIDE OF WHAT IT MEANS
TO BE AN AMERICAN.

THE FREEDOM WE ENJOY TODAY, THESE FALLEN WON FOR US.

THE WAY OF LIFE WE CHERISH, THEY PROTECTED FOR US.

THE HERITAGE THEY DEFENDED IS NOW IN OUR HANDS.

WE ARE THE GUARDIANS OF THEIR TRUST. ARLINGTON CEMETERY IS

THEIR SACRED SHRINE, BUT THEIR GREATEST MONUMENT IS THE AMERICA

THEY DIED TO DEFEND.

THE VALUE OF THEIR SACRIFICE -- THE WORTH OF WHAT

THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES TO DEFEND -- DEPENDS ON HOW WELL WE MEET

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TODAY.

IF WE LIVE IN PEACE AS BRAVELY AS THEY DIED IN WAR, THE

WORLD WILL REMEMBER THEM AS LONG AS THERE ARE FREE MEN TO BE

INSPIRED.

MEMORIAL DAY HAS ALWAYS MEANT A GREAT DEAL TO ME --

AS A SCHOOLBOY, AS A YOUNG MAN IN THE NAVY DURING THE SECOND
WORLD WAR, IN MY YEARS IN THE CONGRESS, AND, LAST MEMORIAL DAY,
WHEN I SPOKE FROM THIS ROSTRUM AS VICE PRESIDENT. TODAY,
IT IS AN OCCASION EVEN MORE DEEPLY FELT.

ALTHOUGH WE LIVE IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD, SOME
THINGS REMAIN THE SAME. ONE IS THE NEED TO MAINTAIN OUR MILITARY
STRENGTH. FOR AS LONG AS THERE ARE LAWBREAKERS IN THE WORLD,
WE MUST HAVE THE STRENGTH AND THE RESOLVE TO STAND UP FOR WHAT IS
RIGHT. IT IS THE PRICE WE HAVE ALWAYS PAID FOR BEING FREE.
IT IS THE PRICE WE MUST BE WILLING TO PAY IN THE FUTURE.

SO, TODAY, WE PAY TRIBUTE NOT ONLY TO OUR WARTIME
DEAD, BUT TO THOSE WHO MADE THE SAME SACRIFICE IN KEEPING THE
PEACE. THEY HAVE PROVEN THAT THE QUALITY OF HEROISM -- OF LOVE
OF COUNTRY AND WILLINGNESS TO SERVE IN TIME OF TROUBLES --
BEATS JUST AS STRONG IN AMERICAN HEARTS TODAY AS EVER.

AS WE HONOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR
LIVES, LET US ALSO PRAY FOR THE SAFETY OF THOSE STILL MISSING
IN ACTION AND THE SOLACE OF THOSE WHO WAIT AS WELL AS THOSE WHO
MOURN. THE WORLD SHOULD KNOW THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT
FALTER IN ITS DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE AN ADEQUATE ACCOUNTING
OF OUR M-I-A'S.

FINALLY, LET US RESOLVE TO LEARN FROM THE EXAMPLE OF
THOSE WHOSE MEMORIES WE HONOR TODAY. MAY THE COURAGE
THEY DEMONSTRATED IN WAR GUIDE US TO EVEN GREATER ACHIEVEMENTS
IN PEACE.

PEACE, TOO, CAN HAVE ITS HEROES. IN OUR EVERY DAY
LIVES, \ IN THE EXAMPLE WE SET, \ IN THE KIND OF COUNTRY WE BUILD, \
AND IN THE NATIONAL CHARACTER WE SUSTAIN, WE CAN ERECT THE
GREATEST MONUMENT OF ALL TO THOSE WE HONOR HERE TODAY.

THEY WILL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN -- AND THEIR LOVED
ONES WILL NOT HAVE SUFFERED IN VAIN -- IF WE VOW TO LIVE OUR LIVES
IN THE CAUSE OF HONOR, FREEDOM AND JUSTICE THAT THEY SO
GALLANTLY SERVED.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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