

**The original documents are located in Box 24, “3/4/76 - Remarks at Ceremonies for the Presentation of the Medal of Honor to Four Recipients” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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**MEDAL OF HONOR PRESENTATION CEREMONY**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1976**

~~THE~~ PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

MEDAL OF HONOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES
- DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

FYI- INVITED

SENATOR FANNIN  
NELSON  
MATHIAS  
BEALL  
STONE  
THURMOND

CONG. DEERLIN  
WILSON  
STEIGER  
ZABLOCKI  
SPELLMAN  
DICKINSON  
STRATTON  
MONTGOMERY

- SECRETARY RUMSFELD
- SECRETARY MIDDENDORF
- SECRETARY REED
- MEMBERS OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO HONOR FOUR AMERICANS

FOR EXCEPTIONAL MILITARY GALLANTRY IN THE SERVICE

OF OUR NATION•

ALL FOUR OF THESE MEN DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES ABOVE

AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY. I DEEPLY REGRET THAT ONE

OF THE AWARDS, TO THE LATE CAPTAIN LANCE P. SIJAN (SIGH - JAN)

OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, IS POSTHUMOUS.

THE OTHER THREE -- REAR ADMIRAL JAMES B. STOCKDALE,

UNITED STATES NAVY; | COLONEL GEORGE E. DAY,

THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE; | AND LIEUTENANT THOMAS R. NORRIS,

UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE -- ARE WITH US TODAY.



WE CONFER OUR HIGHEST DECORATION UPON  
THEM FOR THEIR INSPIRING AND HEROIC CONDUCT.

WE DO THIS IN REALIZATION OF THE SIMPLE TRUTH THAT THEY  
HAVE HELPED TO PRESERVE AMERICA'S FUTURE PEACE BY  
DEMONSTRATING THROUGH THEIR COURAGE THE DEDICATION OF  
THOSE ENTRUSTED WITH OUR DEFENSE.

THEIR BRAVERY PLACES THEM IN THE RANKS  
OF THE FINEST OF AMERICA'S HEROES / FROM THE PRESENT BACK  
TO THE YEAR 1776 -- WHEN WE WERE FORCED, AS A NATION,  
TO FIRST TAKE UP ARMS TO DEFEND OUR LIBERTY.  
THESE FOUR MEN SERVED IN VIETNAM. THE WAR IN VIETNAM  
IS NOW OVER.



BUT AS WE TODAY CONFER THE MEDAL OF HONOR ON HEROES

WHO DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES IN VIETNAM, WE HAVE NOT

FORGOTTEN OTHERS WHOSE FATE STILL REMAINS UNKNOWN•

WE WILL CONTINUE, ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, TO PRESS

FOR A FULL ACCOUNTING FOR THOSE MEN / TO RESOLVE QUESTIONS

THAT KEEP MANY AMERICAN FAMILIES LIVING IN ENDLESS

ANXIETY AND AGONY•



THE UNITED STATES TODAY HONORS FOUR MEN

OF UNCOMMON COURAGE WITH THE MEDAL OF HONOR•

BUT WE CAN -- AND MUST -- ALSO HONOR THESE MEN

BY LIVING UP TO THEIR EXAMPLE OF PATRIOTISM•

WE CAN DO THIS BY FULFILLMENT OF OUR OWN DUTY AS A  
NATION, THE HIGHEST TRUST THAT WE BEAR /  
THE PRESERVATION OF THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE  
UNITED STATES IN A VERY DANGEROUS WORLD•



AS WE CELEBRATE OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR,  
WE TAKE SATISFACTION IN OUR POWER TO PRESERVE PEACE  
THROUGH STRENGTH. WE ARE TODAY THE STRONGEST NATION  
IN THE WORLD.

AS PRESIDENT, I INTEND TO MAINTAIN

OUR DETERRENT POWER.

WHILE I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER

TO REDUCE THE DANGER OF WAR BY DIPLOMATIC MEANS,

*my*  
MY POLICY FOR AMERICA'S SECURITY CAN BE SUMMARIZED

IN THREE SIMPLE WORDS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH.

I AM GRATIFIED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS TODAY

AT PEACE• NO AMERICANS ARE IN BATTLE ANYWHERE•

WE HAVE STRENGTHENED VITAL ALLIANCES THAT PRESERVE PEACE

AND STABILITY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD•

BY MAINTAINING UNQUESTIONED STRENGTH AND RESOLVE,

WE CAN COMMAND RESPECT AND PRESERVE THE PEACE●

WE CANNOT WIN AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF FREEDOM, BIG OR SMALL,

WITHOUT THE KIND OF VIGILANCE AND VALOR SYMBOLIZED

BY THE MEDAL OF HONOR, THE HIGHEST OF ALL THIS NATION'S

DECORATIONS●



WE WILL WIN BY PATIENT AND PERSISTENT PURSUIT  
OF A DEFENSE SECOND TO NONE IN A WORLD THAT KNOWS THAT  
AMERICA SAYS WHAT IT MEANS / AND MEANS WHAT IT SAYS•

BY SO DOING, WE WILL PAY AMERICA'S DEBT  
TO THE MEN WE HONOR TODAY, AND THE MANY OTHERS WHO SERVED  
WITH SUCH COURAGE•

A GRATEFUL NATION THANKS ITS DEFENDERS

FOR THEIR RESOLVE IN KEEPING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE WORLD'S BEST HOPE OF PEACE WITH FREEDOM.

ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, I SALUTE

THE CHERISHED MEMORY OF CAPTAIN SIJAN (SIGH - JAN)

AND THE LIVING EXAMPLE OF ADMIRAL STOCKDALE, COLONEL DAY,

AND LIEUTENANT NORRIS. YOU SERVED YOUR NATION WELL

AND HAVE GIVEN US ALL A CLEARER VISION OF A BETTER WORLD.

END OF TEXT