

**The original documents are located in Box 29, “4/23/76 - Presidential Remarks at Peachtree Street Presbyterian Church” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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THE PRESIDENTIAL ARCHIVES

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS AT

PEACHTREE STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

APRIL 23, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PEACHTREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THANK YOU, ADMIRAL HOWELL

SENATOR TALMADGE ?  
•

DR. HARRINGTON

(Minister)

COL. WILLIAMS

(Commander, Atlanta Chapter  
of Military Order of World Wars)

GOLD STAR MOTHERS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

WE OBSERVE TODAY AN OCCASION OF

SOMBER REFLECTION AND GRATEFUL PRAISE.

AS WE HONOR THE MOTHERS OF MEN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES

IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY, WE HAVE CAUSE ONCE

AGAIN TO HONOR THE BRAVE MEN THEMSELVES.

ALTHOUGH OUR HEARTS STILL MOURN THE LOSS  
OF LOVED ONES, WE CAN DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THE KNOWLEDGE  
THAT THEIR SUPREME SACRIFICE WAS MADE IN DEFENSE OF  
OUR NATION'S NOBLEST IDEALS•

THE FACT THAT WE STAND HERE TODAY

AS CITIZENS OF THE STRONGEST AND FREEST AND GREATEST

NATION ON EARTH, IS POWERFUL TESTIMONY TO THE VALOR

AND COURAGE WITH WHICH THESE MEN GAVE THE LAST FULL

MEASURE OF DEVOTION TO AMERICA.

THE PAGES OF HISTORY RECORD THE NAMES

OF MANY BRAVE MEN WHO LED GREAT ARMIES INTO BATTLE

AND TO VICTORY, AND THIS NATION RIGHTLY REVERES THEM.

BUT THERE ARE OTHER NAMES, KNOWN

ONLY TO THOSE OF US ASSEMBLED HERE, WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS

WERE JUST AS GREAT, WHOSE DEVOTION WAS JUST AS

STEADFAST, WHOSE SACRIFICE FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

WAS JUST AS COMPLETE.



THEY ALL SHARE THE SAME GLORY, WON  
MANY TIMES / OVER MANY FOES / IN MANY DIFFERENT UNIFORMS.  
THEIR COMMON ENEMY WAS ALWAYS TYRANNY, AND THANKS  
TO THEM, THAT ENEMY HAS NEVER CAST ITS SHADOW ON  
OUR LAND.

IT IS BY THE DEEDS OF THESE GALLANT MEN --

BY HERALDED ACTS OF BRAVERY AND BY UNKNOWN ACTS

OF QUIET COURAGE -- THAT FREEDOM FLOURISHES IN AMERICA

TODAY. IT IS THEIR LEGACY THAT GOVERNMENT

"OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE"

STILL THRIVES IN AMERICA IN 1976.

OUR MEMORIAL TODAY IS A RECOGNITION OF

THEIR DEEDS AND A CELEBRATION OF THAT LEGACY.

IT IS A PRAYER FOR THE DIVINE CARE OF

MEN WHO HAVE PRESSED THE BATTLE OF FREEDOM AND MADE

FREEDOM SECURE.

AND IT IS A PLEDGE TO THEM OF AMERICA'S

UNFAILING RESOLVE TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE AND CHERISH

THE FREEDOM THEY MADE SECURE FOR US.

AMERICA HAS NO INTENTION OF ABDICATING

ITS LEADERSHIP TO ANY NATION COMMITTED TO THE DESTRUCTION

OF LIBERTY.

WE KNOW THAT THE FREEDOMS WE HAVE

DEFENDED SO OFTEN ARE STILL BEING CHALLENGED TODAY.

WE KNOW THAT OUR STRENGTH, OUR VIGILANCE AND OUR

NATIONAL RESOLVE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF MANKIND'S

HOPE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE WORLD.

WHEN I TOOK THE SOLEMN OATH OF OFFICE

AS YOUR PRESIDENT TWENTY MONTHS AGO, I PLEDGED

MYSELF AND THIS NATION TO AN UNINTERRUPTED AND SINCERE

SEARCH FOR PEACE.

I SAID THEN - AND I SAY AGAIN TODAY -

THAT AMERICA WILL REMAIN STRONG AND UNITED, BUT

OUR STRENGTH WILL BE DEDICATED TO THE SAFETY OF THE

ENTIRE FAMILY OF MAN, AS WELL AS TO OUR OWN PRECIOUS

FREEDOM.



AMERICA HAS SEEN TOO MUCH OF WAR IN THE  
20th CENTURY, TOO MUCH OF SUFFERING AND DYING  
ON BLOODSTAINED FIELDS OF BATTLE.

WE CHERISH THE PEACE THAT AMERICA ENJOYS TODAY,  
THE PEACE THAT FINDS NO AMERICAN BOYS IN COMBAT ANYWHERE  
ON THE FACE OF THE GLOBE.

PEACE TODAY HAS A VERY SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE

BECAUSE WAR TODAY HAS A VERY SPECIAL TERROR.

THE DEVASTATION AND DEATH LEFT IN THE WAKE OF THERMO-NUCLEAR

WAR WOULD BE SO GREAT THAT THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT WOULD

SIMPLY CEASE TO EXIST.

THEREFORE WE MUST DO OUR BEST TO KEEP

THE PEACE, NOT THE PEACE OF WEAKNESS AND CONCESSION,

BUT THE PEACE SECURED BY STRENGTH AND COURAGE.

THIS IS THE ROLE THAT DESTINY CALLS US TO

PLAY.

OUR COUNTRY IS VERY SPECIAL IN THE EYES OF THE

WORLD.

AMERICA SHINES TODAY AS THE BRIGHTEST  
BEACON OF HOPE FOR MILLIONS WHO LIVE IN THE DARKNESS  
OF TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION.

THE MEN WHOSE MOTHERS WE HONOR TODAY  
HAVE HELD THAT BEACON HIGH, HAVE CARRIED IT INTO  
BATTLE, AND MADE THE DARKNESS RETREAT.

NOW THEY HAVE PASSED THE BEACON

TO US.

IN THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES,

IN THE

STEADFASTNESS OF OUR PURPOSE, WE MUST SHOW OURSELVES

WORTHY OF THE SACRIFICE THEY MADE.

MAY WE, LIKE THEM, DEVOTE OURSELVES

TO PEACE AND LIBERTY AND, LIKE THEM, MARCH ALWAYS

IN THE RANKS OF HONOR.

END OF TEXT