Thank You, Gov. Shapp

Sen. Scott

Sen. Schweiker

Gov Ray

Cong. Schultze

Lt. Gov. Kline

Sec. Kleppe

Administrator Warner

Rev. Clergy

Distinguished Guests / Ladies + Gentlemen

[Signature: Mr. Mirtha]
THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE -- PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS
AT VALLEY FORGE -- JULY 4, 1976
THEY CAME HERE IN THE SNOWS OF WINTER OVER A TRAIL MARKED WITH THE BLOOD OF THEIR RAG-BOUND FEET.
THE IRON FORGE THAT GAVE THIS PLACE ITS NAME HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY THE BRITISH WHEN GENERAL WASHINGTON AND HIS RAGGED CONTINENTAL ARMY ENCAMPED HERE, EXHAUSTED, OUTNUMBERED AND SHORT OF EVERYTHING EXCEPT FAITH.
WE GATHER HERE TODAY, TO COMMEMORATE THEIR SACRIFICES EVEN BEFORE THE 200th ANNIVERSARY OF OUR INDEPENDENCE. WE CELEBRATE THE GLORIOUS DECLARATION.
AMERICANS WILL REMEMBER THE NAME OF VALLEY FORGE AS LONG AS THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE LIVES WITHIN THEIR HEARTS.

HERE THE VEIN OF IRON IN OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER WAS FORGED. IN THE 18th CENTURY, THE COLONIAL AMERICAN WAS FAR MORE FREE AND PROSPEROUS THAN HIS EUROPEAN COUSIN.
ENGLISHMEN REGARDED US WITH SOME ENVY AS APPROPRIATE SUBJECTS TO SHARE THEIR GRINDING TAX BURDENS.
AFTER CONCORD BRIDGE AND BREED'S HILL, THE BRITISH GENERALS WERE SOMewhat IMPRESSED WITH OUR MARKSMANSHIP AND FIGHTING SPIRIT, BUT THEY STILL DISMISSED WASHINGTON'S MILITIAMEN AS "A RABBLE IN ARMS."
Many years later, when he was 91, a veteran of Concord was interviewed and asked why he took up his rifle against his king. Did he feel intolerably oppressed?

Nope. Never paid a penny for one of them stamps. Never drank any tea.
NEVER HEARD OF LOCKE; ONLY READ THE BIBLE AND THE ALMANAC.

WELL THEN, WHAT DID ALL THE FIGHTING MEAN?

"YOUNG MAN," THE AGING REVOLUTIONARY SAID FIRMLY.
"WHAT WE MEANT IN GOING FOR THOSE REDCOATS WAS THIS:

WE ALWAYS HAD GOVERNED OURSELVES, AND WE ALWAYS MEANT

TO.

"THEY DIDN'T MEAN WE SHOULD."
WITHOUT JEFFERSON'S ELOQUENCE, THOSE ARE THE WORDS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S DECLARATION OF OUR INDEPENDENCE.

THAT WAS THE STRAIGHT TALK THAT BROUGHT SOME ELEVEN THOUSAND ORDINARY AMERICANS, FARMERS, WORKERS, TRADSMEN, SHOPKEEPERS, INTO THIS VALLEY OF SACRIFICE IN THE BITTER WINTER OF 1777.
UNCOUNTED HUNDREDS WERE NEVER TO LEAVE.

THEY DID NOT DIE AMID THE FURLING BANNERS AND FEARFUL SOUNDS OF BATTLE. THEY WEAKENED SLOWLY AND QUIETLY SUCCUMBED TO COLD, SICKNESS AND STARVATION.
YET THEIR COURAGE AND SUFFERING -- THOSE WHO SURVIVED AS WELL AS THOSE WHO FELL -- WERE NO LESS MEANINGFUL THAN THE SACRIFICES OF THOSE WHO MANNAED THE BATTLEMENTS OF BOSTON AND SCALED THE PARAPETS OF YORKTOWN.
IN THE BATTLE AGAINST DESPAIR, WASHINGTON AND HIS MEN KEPT FREEDOM'S LONELY VIGIL. THE LEADER AND THE LED DREW STRENGTH AND HOPE FROM ONE ANOTHER. AROUND THE WINTER CAMPFIRES THAT DOTTED THESE FIELDS, THE FLAME OF LIBERTY WAS SOMEHOW KEPT BURNING. SOMETHING HAPPENED AT VALLEY FORGE.
That ragged, starving army here emerged and changed in a way that can be sensed but never fully described. They suffered, they trained, they toughened, they buried their dead, and they stayed. They stuck it out.
WHEN SPRING MELTED THE SNOWS AND GREEN RETURNED TO THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE, A PROUD AND DISCIPLINED FIGHTING FORCE MARCHED OUT OF THIS VALLEY ON THE ROAD TO VICTORY, INTO THE PAGES OF HISTORY, UNAWARE OF THE GREATNESS THEY HAD DONE AND OBLIVIOUS TO OUR GRATITUDE.
AS ABRAHAM LINCOLN NOTED LONG AFTERWARDS AT ANOTHER SACRED SITE IN PENNSYLVANIA, NOTHING WE CAN SAY HERE TODAY CAN FURTHER CONSECRATE OR HALLOW THIS GROUND.
BUT WE CAN REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE SHOWN AT VALLEY FORGE, GETTYSBURG, ARGONNE FOREST, ANZIO BEACH AND IWO JIMA.

NOT ALL SACRIFICES ARE MADE IN WAR. THERE ARE ALSO SACRIFICES OF PEACE.
OUR BICENTENNIAL IS THE HAPPY BIRTHDAY OF ALL 50 STATES,
A COMMONWEALTH AND SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES. IT IS NOT
JUST A CELEBRATION FOR THE ORIGINAL 13 COLONIES. AMERICANS
ARE ONE PEOPLE, AND WE CAN STILL HEAR THEM SAYING:
"WE ALWAYS HAVE GOVERNED OURSELVES, AND WE ALWAYS
MEAN TO."
THE EARLIEST ENGLISH SETTLERS CARRIED THE BIBLE AND BLACKSTONE'S COMMENTARY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC AMONG THEIR FEW PRECIOUS POSSESSIONS, AND ESTABLISHED THEIR OWN SELF-GOVERNMENTS ON A STRANGE AND HOSTILE COAST.
AMERICAN FAMILIES IN PRAIRIE SCHOONERS LIKE THESE TOOK WITH THEM ON THE OVERLAND TRAILS THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY AND THE GOD-GIVEN RIGHTS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

THEIR RESTLESS SEARCH FOR A BETTER LIFE WAS BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE.
BUT IT WAS THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE THAT SUSTAINED THEM.

THEY SUFFERED CRUEL WINTERS, SAVAGE ATTACKS, BLAZING DESERTS AND BLOODY FEET. MANY WERE BURIED BESIDE THE TRAIL.
BUT MANY MORE STUCK IT OUT, DUG IN AND BUILT PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS, WHERE WOMEN STOOD THE SAME SENTRY DUTY AS THE MEN. IN THE WEST, THE DECLARATION'S PROMISE OF LEGAL AND POLITICAL EQUALITY FOR WOMEN WAS FIRST BROADENED.
THE AMERICAN PIONEERS KNEW THAT IN THEIR NEW WILDERNESS HOMES THEY WOULD NOT BE COLONIALS, RULED BY A DISTANT GOVERNMENT. THEY HAD ASSURANCE THAT, IN DUE COURSE, THEY COULD GOVERN THEMSELVES AS FULL CITIZENS OF EQUAL STATES.
THIS POLITICAL GUARANTEE MADE ALL THE RISKS AND SACRIFICES WORTHWHILE. THEIR CHILDREN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS WOULD HAVE ALL THE RIGHTS OF WASHINGTON, JACKSON AND LINCOLN.

SO DO WE AND MORE.

INDEED ALL OUR HEROES AND HEROINES OF WAR AND PEACE, SEND US THIS SINGLE URGENT MESSAGE:
THOUGH PROSPERITY IS A GOOD THING, THOUGH COMPASSIONATE
CHARITY IS A GOOD THING, THOUGH INSTITUTIONAL REFORM IS A
GOOD THING, A NATION SURVIVES ONLY SO LONG AS THE SPIRIT
OF SACRIFICE AND SELF-DISCIPLINE IS STRONG WITHIN ITS PEOPLE.
INDEPENDENCE HAS TO BE DEFENDED AS WELL AS DECLARED; FREEDOM IS ALWAYS WORTH FIGHTING FOR; AND LIBERTY ULTIMATELY BELONGS ONLY TO THOSE WILLING TO SUFFER FOR IT.
IF WE REMEMBER THIS, WE CAN BRING HEALTH WHERE THERE IS DISEASE, PEACE WHERE THERE IS STRIFE, PROGRESS WHERE THERE IS POVERTY AND WANT.
AND WHEN OUR TRICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION ROLLS AROUND,
100 YEARS FROM NOW, GRATEFUL AMERICANS WILL COME TO
THIS SHRINE OF QUIET VALOR, THIS FORGE OF OUR REPUBLIC'S
IRON CORE.

END OF TEXT