

Document Four

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: POINTE DU HOC
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We are here to mark that day in history when the Allied armies joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty. For 4 long years, much of Europe had been under a terrible shadow. Free nations had fallen, Jews cried out in the camps, millions cried out for liberation from the conquerors. Europe was enslaved, and the world waited for its rescue. Here the rescue began. Here ^{on a lonely windswept point on the western shore of France.} ~~the West stood, and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.~~

~~The Allied effort was the result of enormous cooperation, enormous coordination, and enormous courage. The men of this Invasion fought on the land, on the sea, and in the air. And they fought on these cliffs.~~

As we stand here today, the air is soft and full of sunlight, and if we pause and listen we will hear the snap of the flags and the click of cameras and the gentle murmur of people come to visit a place of great sanctity and meaning.

But 40 years ago today -- 40 years ago as I speak -- the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the boom of cannons. Before dawn on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 200 American Rangers jumped off ^a ~~the~~ British landing craft, ~~stormed onto the beach,~~ and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission ~~that day~~ was one of the most difficult and daring of the Invasion: to climb these sheer and desolate cliffs and take out the enemy guns. ^{The allies had been told that} ~~for~~ here were concentrated the mightiest of those guns,

which would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance. Removing the guns was pivotal to the Normandy Invasion, which itself was pivotal to the reclaiming of Europe, the end of the war, ~~and the end of the long night of totalitarian conquest.~~

The Rangers looked up and saw ~~the big guns -- and they saw~~ ^{the big casements -- and they saw} the enemy soldiers at the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them and throwing grenades and filling the air with machine gun fire. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot their rope ladders into the face of these cliffs and they pulled themselves up. And when one Ranger would fall another would take his place, and when one rope was cut and a Ranger would hurtle to the bottom, he would find another rope and begin his climb again. They climbed and shot back and held their footing; and in time the enemy guns were quieted, in time the Rangers held the cliffs, in time the enemy pulled back and one by one the Rangers pulled themselves over the top -- and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs they seized back the continent of Europe.

Forty years ago as I speak they were fighting to hold these cliffs. They had radioed back and asked for reinforcements and they were told: There aren't any. But they did not give up. It was not in them to give up. They would not be turned back; they held the cliffs.

~~Two hundred came here. After 2 days of fighting words are hollow next to such deeds, and the valor of these men is impossible to describe. But we know that 200 came here, and by the end of two days of fighting only 90 could still bear arms.~~

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~~I stand here today before the survivors of that battle. We have here today some of the survivors of the battle of Pointe du Hoc, some of the Rangers who took these cliffs. I think who took the cliffs. ~~Stand their faces, remember their~~ ^{free} These are the ~~boys~~ who helped ~~free~~ a continent: these are the heroes~~

~~I want you to know what they did with their lives, for I know what they are thinking as they hear themselves praised. These are men who never stopped giving. They are thinking: "Oh, I was just part of what happened, just a part of a bigger thing... and everyone was brave that day."~~

Gentlemen, I look at you, and I think I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, Everyone was. The heroism of the ^{allies} men of D-Day was 'But we were just part of a bigger effort... and everyone was brave that day.'

boundless, but there was another quality to it, not only of size but of spirit. ~~There was a style that reflected the special honor of each country.~~

^{There was} Do you remember Bill Millin of Scotland? The day of the Invasion, British troops were pinned down near a bridge outside Caen. They were ~~trying to hold their position under enemy fire, and they were~~ crouched against the cold gray ground waiting desperately for reinforcements, ^{when} suddenly they heard the sound of bagpipes wafting through the air, amorphous as a dream. Some of them thought it was. But the sound of those bagpipes came closer and louder, and they looked up to see Bill Millin of the 51st Scottish Highlanders marching at the head of the reinforcements, ignoring the smack of the bullets into the sand around him. Lord Lovat was with him -- Lord Lovat of England, marching along with his commandos, ^{and} equally unconcerned at the enemy fire. When he got to the bridge Lord Lovat calmly announced, "Sorry I'm a few minutes late." As if he'd been delayed by bad weather or a traffic jam. When in truth he'd been delayed by the bloody fighting on Sword Beach, which he and his men had just taken.

There was the young Frenchman, Michel de Vallavielle, who had been confined by the Germans in his home near Utah Beach. When the Invasion began he defied the enemy patrols, broke the curfew, and ran from his house to the beach to tell the Allied

troops where the ^{enemy} German guns were hidden. ~~We did not know it was D-Day -- he had no reason to think the invaders would be successful -- but like so many Frenchmen he had to help, and he did; and later that day he was shot when a paratrooper mistook him for one of the enemy, and it took him a year in Allied hospitals to recover.~~

There was the doggedness of Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort of the All ^{American} America Screaming Eagles, who broke his leg when he parachuted on to French soil. So he commandeered a small farm cart and ordered his men to wheel him on to the battlefield. ~~There was the grace of General Theodore Roosevelt Jr., who walked with his men on Omaha Beach, and took the same risks as they. His calmness under fire rallied the troops. He died and was buried during the push for Paris. To this day, his men say he epitomized the phrase "an officer and a gentleman."~~

There was the impossible valor of the Poles, who threw themselves between the enemy and the rest of Europe as the Invasion took hold. And the unsurpassed courage of the Canadians, the only troops who knew exactly what they would face when they hit the beaches. ^{Two years} ~~The year~~ before, their countrymen had been slaughtered at Dieppe. They knew what awaited them here, but they would not be deterred, and ^{once} they hit Juno Beach ~~and held~~ ^{they never} ~~it and would not let go.~~

~~There was the honor of the German soldiers. By the summer of 1944, some of them had lost faith in their rulers, but they kept faith with their people and they kept the faith of the corps. Many fought as great men fight, and, in the military~~

~~tradition that honors gallantry for itself alone, some of them were buried with the Allied dead.~~

All of these men were part of a rollcall of honor, with names that speak of a pride as bright as the colors they wore: the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, the Manitoba Grenadiers, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Yeomen of England's armoured divisions, the forces of Free France, the Regiment de Chars de Combat, the 101st Airborne. ~~the~~ These names are written forever on this sand and on this wind, for truly these are men who "in their lives fought for life . . . and left the vivid air signed with their honor."

What inspired the men of the armies that met here? What impelled them to put all thought of self-preservation behind, and ~~put themselves in harm's way not for their own sake but for others?~~ *risk their lives to take these beaches and hold these cliffs?* ~~What was it that made them overcome fear and become champions of liberty?~~

It was faith and belief; it was loyalty and love. It was faith that what they were doing was right, faith that they fought for all humanity, faith that a just God would grant them mercy on this beachhead -- or the next. It was the deep knowledge (and pray God we have not lost it) that there is a profound, moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest. They were here to liberate, not to conquer, and so they did not doubt their cause. And they were right not to doubt.

They knew that some things are worth dying for -- that one's country is worth dying for and that democracy is worth dying for, because it is the most deeply honorable form of Government ever

devised by man. They loved liberty and they were happy to fight against tyranny. And they knew the people of their countries were behind them and supporting them.

~~The Americans who fought here~~ ^{the morning of the invasion}
~~The British soldiers knew this when they pushed off from~~
~~England on the night of June 5th. The Invasion was still a~~ ^{what was happenin}
~~secret and there were to be no big goodbyes for the townspeople~~
~~knew in their hearts, though they could not know in fact,~~
~~who saw them off. But as the soldiers departed they could see~~
~~that they were filling the churches in Georgia at 4 a.m.~~
~~the people crying as they said farewell. The American soldiers~~
~~and they were kneeling on their porches and praying~~
~~knew in their hearts, though they could not know in fact, that~~
~~in Kansas, and in Philadelphia they were ringing~~
~~when word of the invasion spread throughout America, people~~
~~the Liberty Bell. ~~It~~~~
~~filled the churches at 4 a.m., and families dressed in their~~
~~nightclothes knelt and prayed on their porches; and in~~
~~Philadelphia they did what they do to mark the most momentous~~
~~occasions of our national life: They rang the Liberty Bell.~~
~~Bells rang out all across America that night.~~

And there was another element that helped the men of D-Day. It was the rockhard belief that Providence would have a great hand in the events that would unfold here; that God was an ally in this great cause. And, so, the night before the Invasion, when Colonel Wolverton asked his parachute troops to kneel with him in prayer he told them: Do not bow your heads but look up so you can see God and ask His blessing in what we are about to do. And in another part of England ^{that night} General Mathew Ridgeway ~~that same~~
~~night~~ ^{tossed} lay on his cot and talked to his God and listened for the ^{promise made}
~~words~~ spoken to Joshua: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

These are the things that impelled them; these are the things that informed the unity of the West. And with that unity the West could not be stopped.

~~Within a few weeks of the Invasion the forces of Free France swept into Paris, and the people of that great city filled the streets with roar after roar of "Vive la France, Vive la division LeClerc." Paris was free again; soon France would be free again, and Europe would be free.~~

When the war was over ~~the nations that emerged from the ashes were faced with the challenge of making a new beginning.~~ There were lives to be rebuilt and ~~communities to be~~ ^{governments to be returned} ~~reconstructed.~~ ~~There were governments to be returned to the~~ ^{to the people -- there were} ~~people and nations to be reborn.~~ ^{and} Above all, there was a new peace to be assured. These were huge and daunting tasks. But the Allies ^{summoned strength} ~~who fought in the Normandy Invasion drew new strength~~ from the faith and belief and loyalty and love of those who fell here. And they rebuilt a new Europe together.

^{There} ~~Their first accomplishment~~ was a great reconciliation, not only of those who fought on opposite sides in the war . . . but of those nations which had been torn for centuries by rivalries of territory and religion and power. ~~Never again would~~ Finally, with the end of World War II, the rivalries which had bedeviled Western Europe for centuries were interred.

~~After that great and historic accomplishment, the Allies together rebuilt the rubble of Europe. This effort required the same cooperation, coordination, and courage that the Normandy Invasion required.~~ Inspired by the virtues of the men who fought the war, the United States created the Marshall Plan -- by which we helped rebuild our allies and our former enemies. The Marshall Plan led to the Atlantic Alliance -- a great alliance that functions as a shield for democracy and for prosperity. ~~a~~

~~great alliance that acknowledges that Europe's destiny is
America's destiny.~~

In spite of our great efforts and our great successes, not all of what followed the end of the war was happy, or planned. ~~The destruction of the war left Europe weakened in the face of Soviet communism.~~ Some of the countries that had been liberated were lost. The great sadness of that fact echoes down to our own time ~~and can be seen~~ in the streets of Poland and Czechoslovakia and Hungary. ~~We saw threatening Soviet action in Berlin -- and we realized that the Soviet troops that occupied the center of~~ ^{The Soviet troops that came to the center} ~~of this continent would not leave after the end of the war that called them here.~~ ^{when peace came.} They are there to this day, uninvited, unwanted, but still unyielding almost 40 years after the war ended.

Because of this, Allied forces still stand on this continent. But our armies are here only to protect and defend democracy -- and never to take land that is not ours. The only land we hold is the graveyards ~~like these~~ where our heroes rest.

We in America have learned the bitter lessons of two world wars: that it is better to be here and ready to preserve and protect the peace, than to take blind shelter in our homes across the sea, rushing only to respond after freedom is threatened. We have learned, in spite of our long and enduring desire for peace, that isolationism never was and never can be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with expansionist intent. ~~We have learned that isolationism does not avert war. It assures it.~~

~~But we try always to prepare for peace. That is why we live in difficult times. It would be a wonderful thing if today, 40 years after the Normandy Invasion, we could say that we have tried to negotiate the control of arms. Tyranny was forever defeated on these shores. But history did not grant us the right to make that claim. There are those who say that the West is the great destabilizing force in the world today, that America is the reason we have not achieved peace, that America is the warmonger and America is the problem.~~

~~I tell you truly that this is not so. It never was and it never will be. All that we do to build our defenses and to negotiate the control of arms is part of our effort to be prepared for peace.~~

In truth there is no reconciliation we would welcome more than a reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so that together we can lessen the chance of conflict, now and forever.

I tell you from my heart that we in the United States do not want war. We want to wipe from the face of the Earth the terrible weapons man now has in his hands. I tell you we are ready to seize that beachhead -- but there must be some sign from the Soviet Union that they are willing to move forward, that they share our desire and love for peace, that they will give up the ways of conquest. There must be a changing there that will allow us to turn our hope into action.

We will pray on forever that some day that changing will come. But for now -- and particularly today -- it is good and fitting for us to renew our commitment to each other, to our freedom, and to the alliance that protects it.

We are bound still by what bound us 40 years ago, bound by the same loyalties and traditions and beliefs. We are bound by

reality: The strength and freedom of America's allies is still vital to the future of the United States. And the American security guarantee remains indispensable to the continued freedom and independence of Europe's democracies. We know, as we did 40 years ago, that ~~our future is your future, and our hopes are your hopes.~~ ^{your destiny is our destiny, and your hopes are our hopes.}

Together, ~~on this day 40 years after the Allies seized back a continent to liberty,~~ ^{in this place where the west stood together,} let us make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we understand what they died for; ~~and we honor those ideals no less than they.~~ Let us say to them through our actions the words for which Mathew Ridgeway listened: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

Strengthened by their courage, heartened by their valor and borne by their memory, let us continue ~~together to represent~~ ^{to stand for} the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you all very much.