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Normandy  
on PNB  
—

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary  
(Normandy, France)

For Immediate Release

June 6, 1984

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO ASSEMBLED VETERANS AT POINTE DU HOC

Cricqueville, France

1:20 P.M. (L)

THE PRESIDENT: We're here to mark that day in history when the Allied armies joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty. For four 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. Europe was enslaved and the world prayed for its rescue. Here, in Normandy, the rescue began. Here, the Allies stood and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft: but 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men and the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn, on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 Rangers jumped off the British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission 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 some of the mightiest of these guns were here and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers, the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and began to pull themselves up. When one Ranger fell, another would take his place. When one rope was cut, a Ranger would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back and held their footing. Soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs, they began to seize back the Continent of Europe.

Two hundred and twenty-five came here. After two days of fighting, only 90 could still bear arms.

Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there.

These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. (Applause.) These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war.

MORE

Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life . . . and left the vivid air signed with your honor."

I think I know what you may be thinking right now: Thinking "we were just part of a bigger effort; everyone was brave that day." Well, everyone was. Do you remember the story of Bill Millin of the 51st Highlanders? Forty years ago today, British troops were pinned down near a bridge, waiting desperately for help. Suddenly, they heard the sound of bagpipes, and some thought they were dreaming. Well, they weren't. They looked up and saw Bill Millin with his bagpipes, leading the reinforcements and ignoring the smack of the bullets into the ground around him.

Lord Lovat was with him -- Lord Lovat of Scotland who calmly announced when he got to the bridge: "Sorry I'm a few minutes late," as if he'd been delayed by a traffic jam, when in truth he'd just come from the bloody fighting on Sword Beach which he and men had just taken.

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 who had already seen the horrors of war on this coast. They knew what awaited them there, but they would not be deterred. And once they hit Juno Beach, they never looked back.

All of these men were part of a rollcall of honor with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: The Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armored divisions, the forces of Free France, the Coast Guard's "Matchbox Fleet" and you, the American Rangers.

Forty summers have passed since the battle that you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs; some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet, you risked everything here. Why? Why did you do it? What impelled you to put aside the instinct for self-preservation and risk your lives to take these cliffs? What inspired all the men of the armies that met here?

MORE

We look at you, and somehow we know the answer. It was faith and belief; it was loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had 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 on 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. You were here to liberate, not to conquer, and so you and those others did not doubt your cause. And you were right not to doubt.

You all knew that some things are worth dying for: one's country is worth dying for; and democracy is worth dying for, because it's the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. All of you loved liberty; all of you were willing to fight tyranny; and you knew the people of your countries were behind you.

The Americans who fought here that morning knew word of the Invasion was spreading through the darkness back home. They fought -- or felt in their hearts, though they couldn't know in fact, that in Georgia they were filling the churches at 4:00 a.m., in Kansas they were kneeling on their porches and praying, and in Philadelphia they were ringing the Liberty Bell.

Something else helped the men of D-Day: Their 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're about to do. Also that night, General Matthew Ridgway on his cot, listening in the darkness for the promise God made to Joshua: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

These are the things that impelled them; these are the things that shaped the unity of the Allies.

When the war was over, there were lives to be rebuilt and governments to be returned to the people. There were nations to be reborn. Above all, there was a new peace to be assured. These were huge and daunting tasks. But the Allies summoned strength from the faith, belief, loyalty and love of those who fell here. They rebuilt a new Europe together.

There was first a great reconciliation among those who had been enemies, all of whom had suffered so greatly. The United States did its part, creating the Marshall Plan to help rebuild our allies and our former enemies. The Marshall Plan led to the Atlantic Alliance -- a great alliance that serves to this day as our shield for freedom, for prosperity, and for peace.

MORE

In spite of our great efforts and successes, not all that followed the end of the war was happy, or planned. Some liberated countries were lost. The great sadness of this loss echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague, and East Berlin. Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They're still there, uninvited, unwanted, unyielding, almost 40 years after the war.

Because of this, allied forces still stand on this continent. Today, as 40 years ago, our armies are here for only one purpose -- to protect and defend democracy. The only territories we hold are memorials like this one and graveyards where our heroes rest.

We in America have learned bitter lessons from two world wars: It is better to be here ready to protect the peace, than to take blind shelter across the sea, rushing to respond only after freedom is lost. We've learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with an expansionist intent.

But we try always to be prepared for peace; prepared to deter aggression; prepared to negotiate the reduction of arms; and, yes, prepared to reach out again the spirit of reconciliation. In truth, there is no reconciliation we would welcome more than a reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so, together, we can lessen the risks of war, now and forever.

It's fitting to remember here the great losses also suffered by the Russian people during World War II: 20 million perished, a terrible price that testifies to all the world the necessity of ending war. 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 that man now has in his hands. And I tell you, we are ready to seize that beachhead -- we look for some sign from the Soviet Union that they are willing to move forward, that they share our desire and love for peace, and 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 forever that some day that changing will come. But for now, particularly today, it is good and fitting to renew our commitment to each other, to our freedom, and to the alliance that protects it.

We are bound today by what bound us 40 years ago, the same loyalties, traditions, and beliefs. We're bound by reality. The strength of America's allies is vital to the United States, and the American security guarantee is essential to the continued freedom of Europe's democracies. We were with you then; we are with you now. Your hopes are our hopes, and your destiny is our destiny.

Here, in this place where the West held together, let us make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we understand what they died for; let our actions say to them the words for which Matthew Ridgway listened: "I will not fail them nor forsake thee."

Strengthened by their courage, heartened by their valor, and borne by their memory, let us continue to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you very much and God bless you all. (Applause.)

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MOVES

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

POINTE DU HOC

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. EUROPE WAS ENSLAVED, AND THE WORLD PRAYED FOR ITS RESCUE. HERE, IN NORMANDY, THE RESCUE BEGAN. HERE THE ALLIES STOOD, AND FOUGHT AGAINST TYRANNY IN A GIANT UNDERTAKING UNPARALLELED IN HUMAN HISTORY.

WE STAND ON A LONELY, WINDSWEPT POINT ON THE NORTHERN SHORE OF FRANCE. THE AIR IS SOFT, BUT, 40 YEARS AGO AT THIS MOMENT, THE AIR WAS DENSE WITH SMOKE AND THE CRIES OF MEN; THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE CRACK OF RIFLE FIRE AND THE ROAR OF CANNON.

AT DAWN ON THE MORNING OF THE 6TH OF JUNE, 1944, 225 AMERICAN RANGERS JUMPED OFF THE BRITISH LANDING CRAFT AND RAN TO THE BOTTOM OF THESE CLIFFS. THEIR MISSION 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 SOME OF THE MIGHTIEST OF THOSE GUNS WERE HERE, AND THEY WOULD BE TRAINED ON THE BEACHES TO STOP THE ALLIED ADVANCE.

THE RANGERS LOOKED UP AND SAW THE ENEMY SOLDIERS AT THE EDGE OF THE CLIFFS SHOOTING DOWN AT THEM WITH MACHINE GUNS AND THROWING GRENADES. AND THE AMERICAN RANGERS BEGAN TO CLIMB. THEY SHOT ROPE LADDERS OVER THE FACE OF THESE CLIFFS AND BEGAN TO PULL THEMSELVES UP. WHEN ONE RANGER FELL, ANOTHER WOULD TAKE HIS PLACE; WHEN ONE ROPE WAS CUT, A RANGER WOULD GRAB ANOTHER AND BEGIN HIS CLIMB AGAIN.

THEY CLIMBED, SHOT BACK, AND HELD THEIR FOOTING; SOON, ONE BY ONE, THE RANGERS PULLED THEMSELVES OVER THE TOP -- AND IN SEIZING THE FIRM LAND AT THE TOP OF THESE CLIFFS THEY BEGAN TO SEIZE BACK THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE.

225 CAME HERE. AFTER TWO DAYS OF FIGHTING, ONLY 90 COULD STILL BEAR ARMS.

BEHIND ME IS A MEMORIAL THAT SYMBOLIZES THE RANGER DAGGERS THAT WERE THRUST INTO THE TOP OF THESE CLIFFS. AND BEFORE ME ARE THE MEN WHO PUT THEM THERE.

THESE ARE THE BOYS OF POINTE DU HOC. THESE ARE THE MEN WHO TOOK THE CLIFFS. THESE ARE THE CHAMPIONS WHO HELPED FREE A CONTINENT; THESE ARE THE HEROES WHO HELPED END A WAR.

GENTLEMEN, I LOOK AT YOU AND I THINK OF THE WORDS OF STEPHEN SPENDER'S POEM. YOU ARE MEN WHO IN YOUR "LIVES FOUGHT FOR LIFE...AND LEFT THE VIVID AIR SIGNED WITH YOUR HONOR."

I THINK I KNOW WHAT YOU MAY BE THINKING RIGHT NOW: "WE WERE JUST PART OF A BIGGER EFFORT; EVERYONE WAS BRAVE THAT DAY."

EVERYONE WAS. DO YOU REMEMBER THE STORY OF BILL MILLIN OF THE 51ST HIGHLANDERS? FORTY YEARS AGO TODAY, BRITISH TROOPS WERE PINNED DOWN NEAR A BRIDGE, WAITING DESPERATELY FOR HELP. SUDDENLY, THEY HEARD THE SOUND OF BAGPIPES, AND SOME THOUGHT IT WAS A DREAM. IT WASN'T. THEY LOOKED UP AND SAW BILL MILLIN WITH HIS BAGPIPES, LEADING THE REINFORCEMENTS, AND IGNORING THE SMACK OF THE BULLETS INTO THE GROUND AROUND HIM.

LORD LOVAT WAS WITH HIM -- LORD LOVAT OF SCOTLAND, WHO CALMLY ANNOUNCED WHEN HE GOT TO THE BRIDGE: SORRY I'M A FEW MINUTES LATE, AS IF HE'D BEEN DELAYED BY A TRAFFIC JAM -- WHEN IN TRUTH HE'D JUST COME FROM THE BLOODY FIGHTING ON SWORD BEACH, WHICH HE AND HIS MEN HAD JUST TAKEN.

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, WHO HAD ALREADY SEEN THE HORRORS OF WAR ON THIS COAST. THEY KNEW WHAT AWAITED THEM HERE, BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE DETERRED; ONCE THEY HIT JUNO BEACH, THEY NEVER LOOKED BACK.

ALL OF THESE MEN WERE PART OF A  
ROLLCALL OF HONOR, WITH NAMES THAT SPOKE OF  
A PRIDE AS BRIGHT AS THE COLORS THEY BORE:  
THE ROYAL WINNIPEG RIFLES, POLAND'S 24TH  
LANCERS, THE ROYAL SCOTS FUSILIERS,  
THE SCREAMING EAGLES, THE YEOMEN OF  
ENGLAND'S ARMoured DIVISIONS, THE FORCES OF  
FREE FRANCE, THE COAST GUARD'S "MATCHBOX  
FLEET" ...AND YOU, THE AMERICAN RANGERS.

FORTY SUMMERS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE  
BATTLE YOU FOUGHT HERE. YOU WERE YOUNG THE  
DAY YOU TOOK THESE CLIFFS -- SOME OF YOU  
WERE HARDLY MORE THAN BOYS, WITH THE DEEPEST  
JOYS OF LIFE BEFORE YOU. YET YOU RISKED  
EVERYTHING HERE. WHY? WHY DID YOU DO IT?  
WHAT IMPELLED YOU TO PUT ASIDE THE INSTINCT  
FOR SELF-PRESERVATION AND RISK YOUR LIVES TO  
TAKE THESE CLIFFS? WHAT INSPIRED ALL THE  
MEN OF THE ARMIES THAT MET HERE?



WE LOOK AT YOU, AND SOMEHOW WE KNOW THE ANSWER.

IT WAS FAITH AND BELIEF; IT WAS LOYALTY AND LOVE.

THE MEN OF NORMANDY HAD 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 ON 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 SOME THINGS ARE WORTH DYING FOR: ONE'S COUNTRY IS WORTH DYING FOR; AND DEMOCRACY IS WORTH DYING FOR, BECAUSE IT IS THE MOST DEEPLY HONORABLE FORM OF GOVERNMENT EVER DEVISED BY MAN. THEY LOVED LIBERTY; THEY WERE WILLING TO FIGHT TYRANNY; THEY KNEW THE PEOPLE OF THEIR COUNTRIES WERE BEHIND THEM.

THE AMERICANS WHO FOUGHT HERE THAT MORNING KNEW WORD OF THE INVASION WAS SPREADING THROUGH THE DARKNESS BACK HOME. THEY FELT IN THEIR HEARTS, THOUGH THEY COULD NOT KNOW IN FACT, THAT IN GEORGIA THEY WERE FILLING THE CHURCHES AT 4 A.M., IN KANSAS THEY WERE KNEELING ON THEIR PORCHES AND PRAYING, AND IN PHILADELPHIA THEY WERE RINGING THE LIBERTY BELL.

SOMETHING ELSE HELPED THE MEN OF D-DAY: THEIR 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. ALSO THAT NIGHT, GENERAL MATTHEW RIDGWAY LAY ON HIS COT, LISTENING IN THE DARKNESS FOR THE PROMISE GOD MADE TO JOSHUA: "I WILL NOT FAIL THEE NOR FORSAKE THEE."

THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT IMPELLED THEM; THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT SHAPED THE UNITY OF THE ALLIES.

WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER, THERE WERE LIVES TO BE REBUILT AND GOVERNMENTS TO BE RETURNED TO THE PEOPLE. THERE WERE NATIONS TO BE REBORN.

ABOVE ALL, THERE WAS A NEW PEACE TO BE ASSURED. THESE WERE HUGE AND DAUNTING TASKS. BUT THE ALLIES SUMMONED STRENGTH FROM THE FAITH, BELIEF, LOYALTY AND LOVE OF THOSE WHO FELL HERE. THEY REBUILT A NEW EUROPE TOGETHER.

THERE WAS FIRST A GREAT RECONCILIATION AMONG THOSE WHO HAD BEEN ENEMIES, ALL OF WHOM HAD SUFFERED SO GREATLY. THE UNITED STATES DID ITS PART, CREATING THE MARSHALL PLAN TO HELP REBUILD OUR ALLIES AND OUR FORMER ENEMIES. THE MARSHALL PLAN LED TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE -- A GREAT ALLIANCE THAT SERVES TO THIS DAY AS OUR SHIELD FOR FREEDOM, FOR PROSPERITY, AND FOR PEACE.

IN SPITE OF OUR GREAT EFFORTS AND SUCCESSES, NOT ALL THAT FOLLOWED THE END OF THE WAR WAS HAPPY, OR PLANNED. SOME LIBERATED COUNTRIES WERE LOST.

THE GREAT SADNESS OF THIS LOSS ECHOES DOWN TO OUR OWN TIME IN THE STREETS OF WARSAW, PRAGUE, AND EAST BERLIN. THE SOVIET TROOPS THAT CAME TO THE CENTER OF THIS CONTINENT DID NOT LEAVE WHEN PEACE CAME. THEY ARE STILL THERE, UNINVITED, UNWANTED, UNYIELDING, ALMOST 40 YEARS AFTER THE WAR.

BECAUSE OF THIS, ALLIED FORCES STILL STAND ON THIS CONTINENT. TODAY, AS 40 YEARS AGO, OUR ARMIES ARE HERE FOR ONLY ONE PURPOSE -- TO PROTECT AND DEFEND DEMOCRACY. THE ONLY TERRITORIES WE HOLD ARE MEMORIALS LIKE THIS ONE AND THE GRAVEYARDS WHERE OUR HEROES REST.

WE IN AMERICA HAVE LEARNED BITTER LESSONS FROM TWO WORLD WARS: IT IS BETTER TO BE HERE, READY TO PROTECT THE PEACE, THAN TO TAKE BLIND SHELTER ACROSS THE SEA, RUSHING TO RESPOND ONLY AFTER FREEDOM IS LOST.

WE HAVE LEARNED THAT ISOLATIONISM NEVER WAS AND NEVER WILL BE AN ACCEPTABLE RESPONSE TO TYRANNICAL GOVERNMENTS WITH EXPANSIONIST INTENT.

BUT WE TRY ALWAYS TO BE PREPARED FOR PEACE; PREPARED TO DETER AGGRESSION; PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE THE REDUCTION OF ARMS; AND, YES, PREPARED TO REACH OUT AGAIN IN THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION.

IN TRUTH, THERE IS NO RECONCILIATION WE WOULD WELCOME MORE THAN A RECONCILIATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION, SO, TOGETHER, WE CAN LESSEN THE RISKS OF WAR, NOW AND FOREVER.

IT IS FITTING TO REMEMBER HERE THE GREAT LOSSES ALSO SUFFERED BY THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE DURING WORLD WAR II: 20 MILLION PERISHED, A TERRIBLE PRICE THAT TESTIFIES TO ALL THE WORLD THE NECESSITY OF AVOIDING WAR.

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 FOREVER THAT SOME DAY THAT CHANGING WILL COME. BUT FOR NOW, PARTICULARLY TODAY, IT IS GOOD AND FITTING TO RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER, TO OUR FREEDOM, AND TO THE ALLIANCE THAT PROTECTS IT.

WE ARE BOUND TODAY BY WHAT BOUND US 40 YEARS AGO, THE SAME LOYALTIES, TRADITIONS, AND BELIEFS.

AND WE ARE BOUND BY REALITY: THE STRENGTH OF AMERICA'S ALLIES IS VITAL TO THE UNITED STATES, AND THE AMERICAN SECURITY GUARANTEE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUED FREEDOM OF EUROPE'S DEMOCRACIES. WE WERE WITH YOU THEN; WE ARE WITH YOU NOW. YOUR HOPES ARE OUR HOPES, AND YOUR DESTINY IS OUR DESTINY.

HERE, IN THIS PLACE WHERE THE WEST HELD TOGETHER, LET US MAKE A VOW TO OUR DEAD. LET US SHOW THEM BY OUR ACTIONS THAT WE UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY DIED FOR; LET OUR ACTIONS SAY TO THEM THE WORDS FOR WHICH MATTHEW RIDGWAY 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 TO STAND FOR THE IDEALS FOR WHICH THEY LIVED AND DIED.

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH.

# # #



(Noonan/RR)  
June 5, 1984  
2:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: POINTE DU HOC  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

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. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here, in Normandy, the rescue began. Here the Allies stood, and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft, but, 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men; the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 American Rangers jumped off the British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission 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 some of the mightiest of those guns were here, and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers at the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and began to pull themselves up. When one Ranger fell, another would take his

place; when one rope was cut, a Ranger would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back, and held their footing; soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top -- and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs they began to seize back the Continent of Europe.

Two hundred twenty-five came here. After two days of fighting, only 90 could still bear arms.

Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there.

These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent; these are the heroes who helped end a war.

Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life . . . and left the vivid air signed with [your] honor."

I think I know what you may be thinking right now: "We were just part of a bigger effort; everyone was brave that day."

Everyone was. Do you remember the story of Bill Millin of the 51st Highlanders? Forty years ago today, British troops were pinned down near a bridge, waiting desperately for help.

Suddenly, they heard the sound of bagpipes, and some thought it was a dream. It wasn't. They looked up and saw Bill Millin with his bagpipes, leading the reinforcements, and ignoring the smack of the bullets into the ground around him. Lord Lovat was with him -- Lord Lovat of Scotland, who calmly announced when he got to the bridge: Sorry I'm a few minutes late, as if he'd been

delayed by a traffic jam -- when in truth he'd just come from the bloody fighting on Sword Beach, which he and his men had just taken.

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, who had already seen the horrors of war on this coast. They knew what awaited them here, but they would not be deterred; once they hit Juno Beach they never looked back.

All of these men were part of a rollcall of honor, with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armoured divisions, the forces of Free France, the Coast Guard's "Matchbox Fleet" . . . and you, the American Rangers.

Forty summers have passed since the battle you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs -- some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet you risked everything here. Why? Why did you do it? What impelled you to put aside the instinct for self-preservation and risk your lives to take these cliffs? What inspired all the men of the armies that met here?

We look at you, and somehow we know the answer.

It was faith and belief; it was loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had 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 on 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 some things are worth dying for: one's country is worth dying for; and democracy is worth dying for, because it is the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. They loved liberty; they were willing to fight tyranny; they knew the people of their countries were behind them.

The Americans who fought here that morning knew word of the Invasion was spreading through the darkness back home. They felt in their hearts, though they could not know in fact, that in Georgia they were filling the churches at 4 a.m., in Kansas they were kneeling on their porches and praying, and in Philadelphia they were ringing the Liberty Bell.

Something else helped the men of D-Day: Their 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. Also that night, General Matthew Ridgway lay on his cot, listening in the darkness for the promise God made to Joshua: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

These are the things that impelled them; these are the things that shaped the unity of the Allies.

When the war was over, there were lives to be rebuilt and governments to be returned to the people. There were nations to be reborn. Above all, there was a new peace to be assured. These were huge and daunting tasks. But the Allies summoned strength from the faith, belief, loyalty and love of those who fell here. They rebuilt a new Europe together.

There was first a great reconciliation among those who had been enemies, all of whom had suffered so greatly. The United States did its part, creating the Marshall Plan to help rebuild our allies and our former enemies. The Marshall Plan led to the Atlantic Alliance -- a great alliance that serves to this day as our shield for freedom, for prosperity, and for peace.

In spite of our great efforts and successes, not all that followed the end of the war was happy, or planned. Some liberated countries were lost. The great sadness of this loss echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague, and East Berlin. The Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They are still there, uninvited, unwanted, unyielding, almost 40 years after the war.

Because of this, Allied forces still stand on this continent. Today, as 40 years ago, our armies are here for only one purpose -- to protect and defend democracy. The only territories we hold are memorials like this one and the graveyards where our heroes rest.

We in America have learned bitter lessons from two world wars: It is better to be here, ready to protect the peace, than to take blind shelter across the sea, rushing to respond only after freedom is lost. We have learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with expansionist intent.

But we try always to be prepared for peace; prepared to deter aggression; prepared to negotiate the reduction of arms; and, yes, prepared to reach out again in the spirit of reconciliation.

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

It is fitting to remember here the great losses also suffered by the Russian people during World War II: 20 million perished, a terrible price that testifies to all the world the necessity of avoiding war.

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 forever that some day that changing will come. But for now, particularly today, it is good and fitting to renew

our commitment to each other, to our freedom, and to the alliance that protects it.

We are bound today by what bound us 40 years ago, the same loyalties, traditions, and beliefs. And we are bound by reality: The strength of America's allies is vital to the United States, and the American security guarantee is essential to the continued freedom of Europe's democracies. We were with you then; we are with you now. Your hopes are our hopes, and your destiny is our destiny.

Here, in this place where the West held together, let us make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we understand what they died for; let our actions say to them the words for which Matthew Ridgway 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 to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you all very much.

(Noonan/RR)  
June 5, 1984  
Noon

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: POINTE DU HOC  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

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. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here, in Normandy, the rescue began. Here the Allies stood, and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft, but, 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men; the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 American Rangers jumped off the British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission 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 some of the mightiest of those guns were here, and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers at the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and ~~they~~ <sup>fell</sup> began to pull themselves up. When one Ranger ~~would fall~~, another



would take his place; ~~and~~ when one rope was cut a Ranger would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back and held their footing; soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top -- and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs they began to seize back the Continent of Europe.

Two hundred twenty-five came here. After two days of fighting, only 90 could still bear arms.

Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there.

These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent; these are the heroes who helped end a war.

Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life . . . and left the vivid air signed with [your] honor."

I think I know what you may be thinking right now: "We were just part of a bigger effort", ~~and~~ everyone was brave that day."

X History Everyone was. Do you remember the story of Bill Millin of the 51st Highlanders? Forty years ago today, British troops were pinned down near a bridge, waiting desperately for help. reinforcements. Suddenly, they heard the sound of bagpipes, and ~~some of them~~ <sup>It wasn't</sup> thought it was a dream. ~~But~~ they looked up, and ~~there was~~ <sup>Lord's</sup> Bill Millin with his bagpipes, ~~marching at the head of~~ the reinforcements, <sup>and</sup> ignoring the smack of the bullets into the ground around him. Lord Lovat was with him -- Lord Lovat of

Scotland, who calmly announced when he got to the bridge: Sorry I'm a few minutes late, as if he'd been delayed by a traffic jam -- when in truth he'd just come from the bloody fighting on Sword Beach, which he and his men had just taken.

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, who had already seen the horrors of war on this coast. They knew what awaited them here; but they would not be deterred; once they hit Juno Beach they never looked back.

All of these men were part of a rollcall of honor, with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armoured divisions, the forces of Free France, the Coast Guard's "Matchbox Fleet" . . . and you, the American Rangers.

Forty summers have passed since the battle you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs -- some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet you risked everything here. Why? Why did you do it? What impelled you to put the instinct for self-preservation aside and risk your lives to take these cliffs? What inspired all the men of the armies that met here?

We look at you, and somehow we know the answer.

It was ~~faith~~ faith and belief; it was ~~loyalty~~ loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had 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 on the next.

X 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.

X They knew ~~that~~ some things are worth dying for: one's country is worth dying for; and democracy is worth dying for, because it is the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. X They loved liberty; they were willing to fight tyranny; they knew the people of their countries were behind them.

The Americans who fought here that morning knew word of the Invasion was spreading through the darkness back home. They felt in their hearts, though they could not know in fact, that in Georgia they were filling the churches at 4 a.m., in Kansas they were kneeling on their porches and praying, and in Philadelphia they were ringing the Liberty Bell.

Something else helped the men of D-Day: Their 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. Also ~~in England~~

that night, General Matthew Ridgway <sup>lay</sup> ~~laid~~ on his cot, <sup>listening in the</sup> ~~beseeching~~ <sup>darkness</sup> ~~God~~ <sup>God</sup> for the promise made to Joshua: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

These are the things that impelled them; these are the things that shaped the unity of the Allies.

When the war was over there were lives to be rebuilt and governments to be returned to the people. There were nations to be reborn. Above all, there was a new peace to be assured. These were huge and daunting tasks. But the Allies summoned strength from the faith, belief, loyalty and love of those who fell here. They rebuilt a new Europe together.

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In spite of our great efforts and successes, not all that followed the end of the war was happy, or planned. Some liberated countries were lost. The great sadness of this loss echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague, and East Berlin. The Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They are still there, uninvited, unwanted, ~~and~~ unyielding almost 40 years after the war.

Because of this, Allied forces still stand on this continent. Today, as 40 years ago, our armies are here for only

one purpose -- to protect and defend democracy. The only territories we hold are memorials like this one and the graveyards where our heroes rest.

We in America have learned bitter lessons from two world wars: It is better to be here, ready to protect the peace, than to take blind shelter across the sea, rushing to respond only after freedom is lost. We have learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with expansionist intent.

But we try always to be prepared for peace; prepared to deter aggression; prepared to negotiate the reduction of arms; and, yes, prepared to <sup>reach</sup> ~~rush~~ out again in the spirit of reconciliation.

Nancy  
?  
In truth, there is no reconciliation we would welcome more than a reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so, together, we can lessen the risks of war, now and forever.

It is fitting to remember here the great losses also suffered by the Russian people during World War II: 20 million perished, a terrible price that testifies to all the world the necessity of avoiding war.

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 forever that some day that changing will come. But for now, 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 today by what bound us 40 years ago, the same loyalties, traditions and beliefs. And we are bound by reality: The strength of America's allies is vital to the United States, and the American security guarantee is essential to the continued freedom of Europe's democracies. We were with you then; we are with you now. Your hopes are our hopes, and your destiny is our destiny.

Here, in this place where the West held together, let us make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we understand what they died for; let our actions say to them the words for which Matthew Ridgway 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 to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you all very much.

(Noonan/RR)  
May 31, 1984  
5:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: POINTE DU HOC  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

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. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here, in Normandy, the rescue began. Here the <sup>allies</sup> ~~West~~ stood, and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. ~~As I speak~~ the air is soft ~~and full of sunlight~~. But, 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men; the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 American Rangers jumped off <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission 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 <sup>some of</sup> the mightiest of those guns were here, and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers at the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and they began to pull themselves up. ~~And~~ when one Ranger would fall <sup>=</sup> another would take his place; and when one rope was cut a Ranger

would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed ~~and~~ shot back and held their footing; ~~and in time the enemy pulled back; in time the Rangers held the cliffs; and~~ soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top -- and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs they began to seize 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. 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 twenty-five came here. After <sup>two</sup>~~2~~ days of fighting only 90 could still bear arms.

Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there.

These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent; these are the heroes who helped end a war.

Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life . . . and left the vivid air signed with (your) honor."

And I think I know what you <sup>maybe</sup> ~~are~~ thinking right now. "You're thinking ~~"But~~ we were just part of a bigger effort, and everyone was brave that day."

Everyone was. ~~The heroism of all the Allies of D-Day was boundless, but there was another quality to it, not only of size but of spirit.~~



← Do you remember the story of Bill Millin of the 51st ~~Scottish~~ Highlanders? Forty years ago today, British troops were pinned down near a bridge, ~~and~~ waiting desperately for reinforcements.  ~~Suddenly~~ <sup>and</sup> they heard the sound of bagpipes, ~~wafting~~ <sup>and</sup> through the air. Some of them thought it was a dream. But they looked up, and there was Bill Millin with his bagpipes, marching at the head of the reinforcements, ignoring the smack of the bullets into the ~~sand~~ <sup>ground</sup> around him. Lord Lovat was with him -- Lord Lovat of ~~England~~ <sup>Scotland</sup>, who calmly announced when he got to the bridge, 'Sorry I'm a few minutes late,' ~~as if he'd been delayed by bad weather or a traffic jam.~~ <sup>When</sup> in truth he'd just come from the bloody fighting on Sword Beach, which he and his men had just taken.

[ There was Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort of the All American 82nd Airborne, 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 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.~~ <sup>who had already seen the horrors of war on this coast.</sup> Two years 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 they never looked back.

All of these men were part of a rollcall of honor, with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots

Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armoured divisions, the forces of Free France, the ~~Coast Guard "Makbax Fleet"~~ ~~Regiment de Chars de Combat~~ . . . and you, the American Rangers.

Forty summers have passed since the battle you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs -- some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet you risked everything here. ~~We think of that and we ask,~~ <sup>Why?</sup> Why did you do it? What impelled you to put ~~all thought of~~ <sup>the instinct for</sup> self-preservation ~~behind~~ <sup>aside</sup> and risk your lives to take these cliffs? What inspired all of the men of the armies that met here?

We look at you and somehow we know the answer.

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The men of Normandy had 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 <sup>willing</sup> ~~happy~~ to fight tyranny; and they knew the people of their countries were behind them.

The Americans who fought here that morning knew ~~that~~ word of the Invasion was spreading through the darkness back home. ~~And~~ they <sup>felt</sup> ~~knew~~ in their hearts, though they could not know in fact, that in Georgia they were filling the churches at 4 a.m., ~~and~~ in Kansas they were kneeling on their porches and praying, and in Philadelphia they were ringing the Liberty Bell.

Something else helped the men of D-Day. <sup>It was the</sup> ~~It was~~ <sup>ir</sup> 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. <sup>And</sup> ~~And in another part~~ <sup>of</sup> England that night, General Mathew Ridgway <sup>t</sup> tossed on his cot <sup>beseeching</sup> ~~and talked to his~~ God ~~and listened~~ for the promise made to Joshua: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

These are the things that impelled them; these are the things that shaped the unity of the <sup>Allies.</sup> ~~West.~~

When the war was over there were lives to be rebuilt and governments to be returned to the people. <sup>And</sup> ~~there~~ were nations to be reborn ~~and~~ <sup>above</sup> all, there was a new peace to be assured. These were huge and daunting tasks. But the Allies summoned strength from the faith <sup>and</sup> belief <sup>and</sup> loyalty and love of those who fell here. ~~And they~~ <sup>rebuilt</sup> a new Europe together.

There was first a great reconciliation <sup>among the</sup> ~~not only~~ of those who had been enemies <sup>All of whom had suffered so greatly.</sup> ~~in the war, but also of those nations which~~ ~~had been torn for centuries by rivalries of territory and~~

~~religion and power. Those rivalries were interred on these beaches.~~

The United States did its part, <sup>by</sup> creating the Marshall Plan to help rebuild our allies ~~and~~ our former enemies. The Marshall Plan led to the Atlantic Alliance -- a great alliance that <sup>serves</sup> ~~functions~~ to this day as <sup>our</sup> ~~a~~ shield for <sup>freedom,</sup> ~~democracy~~ and for prosperity, ~~and~~ <sup>for peace.</sup>

In spite of our great efforts and ~~our great~~ successes, not all <sup>that</sup> ~~of what~~ followed the end of the war was happy, or planned. Some <sup>liberated</sup> ~~of the~~ countries ~~that had been liberated~~ were lost. The great sadness of <sup>this loss</sup> ~~that fact~~ echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague, and East Berlin. The Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They are <sup>still</sup> ~~there to this day~~, uninvited, unwanted, and unyielding almost 40 years after the war.

Because of this, Allied forces still stand on this continent. Today, as 40 years ago, our armies are here for only one purpose -- to protect and defend democracy. The only territories we hold are <sup>memorials like this one and</sup> ~~the~~ graveyards where our heroes rest.

We in America have learned <sup>from</sup> ~~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 to respond only after freedom <sup>is</sup> ~~has been~~ lost. We have learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with expansionist intent.

But we try always to <sup>be</sup> prepared for peace; <sup>prepared to</sup> ~~That is why we~~  
~~deter aggression; prepared~~  
~~maintain our defenses and that is why we have tried to negotiate~~  
the reduction of arms; and, yes, prepared to rush out again in the  
~~spirit of reconciliation.~~

In truth, there is no reconciliation we would welcome more  
than a reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so ~~that~~ together we  
can lessen the <sup>risk</sup> ~~chance~~ of <sup>war</sup> ~~conflict~~, now and forever. Insert

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 forever that some day that changing will come.  
But for now, ~~and~~ particularly today, ~~it~~ 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 <sup>today</sup> ~~still~~ by what bound us 40 years ago, ~~bound by~~  
the same loyalties, traditions and beliefs. <sup>And</sup> We are bound by  
reality: The strength of America's allies is vital to the United  
States, and the American security guarantee is essential to the  
continued freedom of Europe's democracies. <sup>We were with you</sup> ~~The Allies of~~  
<sup>then; we</sup> ~~40 years ago~~ <sup>with you now.</sup> are allies still. Your destiny is our destiny, ~~and~~  
your hopes are our hopes, and

Here, in this place where the West <sup>held</sup> ~~stood~~ together, let us  
make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we  
understand what they died for; let our actions say to them the

Insert P. 7

Age 9A

Insert: (on page <sup>6</sup>9)

It is fitting <sup>also</sup> here to remember ~~also~~ the great ~~sacrifices~~ <sup>also suffered</sup> made by the Russian people during World War II: ~~Twenty million~~ <sup>Twenty million</sup> ~~lost~~ <sup>perished</sup> ~~of 20 million lives~~ <sup>a terrible price that</sup> testifies to all the world the necessity of avoiding ~~another~~ war.

Check this for 

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 to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you all very much.

(Noonan/RR)  
May 31, 1984  
5:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: POINTE DU HOC  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

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. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here, in Normandy, the rescue began. Here the West stood, and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. As I speak, the air is soft and full of sunlight. But 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 American Rangers jumped off a British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission 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 the mightiest of those guns were here, and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers at the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and they began to pull themselves up. And when one Ranger would fall another would take his place, and when one rope was cut a Ranger



would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed and shot back and held their footing; and in time the enemy pulled back; in time the Rangers held the cliffs; and soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top -- and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs they began to seize 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. 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 twenty-five came here. After a day of fighting only 90 could still bear arms.

Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there.

These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent; these are the heroes who helped end a war.

Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life . . . and left the vivid air signed with (your) honor."

And I think I know what you're thinking right now. You're thinking, "But we were just part of a bigger effort, and everyone was brave that day."

Everyone was. The heroism of all the Allies of D-Day was boundless, but there was another quality to it, not only of size but of spirit.

Do you remember the story of Bill Millin of the 51st Scottish Highlanders? Forty years ago today, British troops were pinned down near a bridge and waiting desperately for reinforcements. Suddenly they heard the sound of bagpipes wafting through the air. Some of them thought it was a dream. But they looked up, and there was Bill Millin with his bagpipes, 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, who calmly announced when he got to the bridge, "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 just come from the bloody fighting on Sword Beach, which he and his men had just taken.

There was Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort of the All American 82nd Airborne, 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 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 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 they never looked back.

All of these men were part of a rollcall of honor, with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots

Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armoured divisions, the forces of Free France, the Regiment de Chars de Combat . . . and you, the American Rangers.

Forty summers have passed since the battle you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs -- some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet you risked everything here. We think of that and we ask: Why did you do it? What impelled you to put all thought of self-preservation behind and risk your lives to take these cliffs? What inspired all of the men of the armies that met here?

We look at you . . . and somehow we know the answer.

It was faith and belief; it was loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had 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 tyranny. And they knew the people of their countries were behind them.

The Americans who fought here that morning knew that word of the Invasion was spreading through the darkness back home. And they knew in their hearts, though they could not know in fact, that in Georgia they were filling the churches at 4 a.m., and in Kansas they were kneeling on their porches and praying, and in Philadelphia they were ringing the Liberty Bell.

Something else 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 tossed on his cot and talked to his God and listened for the promise made to Joshua: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

These are the things that impelled them; these are the things that shaped the unity of the West.

When the war was over there were lives to be rebuilt and governments to be returned to the people -- there were 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 from the faith and belief and loyalty and love of those who fell here. And they rebuilt a new Europe together.

There was first a great reconciliation, not only of those who had been enemies in the war, but also of those nations which had been torn for centuries by rivalries of territory and

religion and power. Those rivalries were interred on these beaches.

The United States did its part by creating the Marshall Plan to help rebuild our allies and our former enemies. The Marshall Plan led to the Atlantic Alliance -- a great alliance that functions to this day as a shield for democracy and for prosperity.

In spite of our great efforts and our great successes, not all of what followed the end of the war was happy, or planned. Some of the countries that had been liberated were lost. The great sadness of that fact echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague, and East Berlin. The Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They are there to this day, uninvited, unwanted, and unyielding almost 40 years after the war.

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But we try always to prepare for peace. That is why we maintain our defenses and that is why we have tried to negotiate the reduction of arms.

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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.

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(Noonan/RR)  
May 31, 1984  
5:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: POINTE DU HOC  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

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We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. As I speak, the air is soft and full of sunlight. But 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 American Rangers jumped off a British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission 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 the mightiest of those guns were here, and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

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Here, 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; let our actions say to them 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 to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you all very much.

Peggy

(Noonan/RR)  
May 30, 1984  
2:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: POINTE DU HOC  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

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. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here, in Normandy, the rescue began. Here the West stood, and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

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Forty years ago as I speak they were fighting to hold these cliffs. They had radioed back and asked for reinforcements. 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 twenty-five came here. After a day of fighting only 90 could still bear arms.

~~Behind me today~~  
(1) ~~I stand here today before the survivors of that battle~~  
~~These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc~~ These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent; these are the heroes who helped end a war.

Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life . . . and left the vivid air signed with (your) honor."

And I think I know what you're thinking right now. You're thinking, "But we were just part of a bigger effort, and everyone was brave that day."

Everyone was. The heroism of all the Allies of D-Day was boundless, but there was another quality to it, not only of size but of spirit.

*the story of*  
Do you remember Bill Millin of the 51st Scottish Highlanders? Forty years ago today, British troops were pinned



down near a bridge ~~outside Caen.~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~They were~~ waiting desperately for reinforcements, ~~when~~ <sup>and</sup> suddenly they heard the sound of bagpipes wafting through the air. Some of them thought it was a dream. But they looked up, and there was Bill Millin with his bagpipes, 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, ~~leading his commandos.~~ <sup>who calmly announced when he got to the bridge,</sup> ~~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 just come from 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. When the Invasion began he defied the enemy patrols, broke the curfew, and ran to the beach to tell the Allied troops where the enemy guns were hidden.]

~~There~~ There was Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort of the All-American 82nd Airborne, 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.

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②

~~The men of Normandy were part of a roll call of honor, with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore:~~

~~the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the <sup>Screaming Eagles</sup> 2nd Ranger Battalion, the Yeomen of England's armoured divisions, the forces of Free France, the Regiment <sup>and the American Rangers</sup> de Chars de Combat, the Screaming Eagles . . .~~

~~What inspired the men of the armies that met here? What impelled them to put all thought of self-preservation behind, and risk their lives to take these beaches and hold these cliffs?~~

~~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.~~

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*Cut*

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

When the war was over there were lives to be rebuilt and governments to be returned to the people -- there were 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 from the faith and belief and loyalty and love of those who fell here. And they rebuilt a new Europe together.

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[Inspired by the gallantry of the men who fought the war] the United States ~~created~~ <sup>did its part by creating</sup> the Marshall Plan to help rebuild our

allies and our former enemies. The Marshall Plan led to the Atlantic Alliance -- a great alliance that functions to this day as a shield for democracy and for prosperity.

In spite of our great efforts and our great successes, not all of what followed the end of the war was happy, or planned. Some of the countries that had been liberated were lost. The great sadness of that fact echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague, and East Berlin. The Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They are there to this day, uninvited, unwanted, and unyielding almost 40 years after the war.

Because of this, Allied forces still stand on this continent. ~~Today, as 40 years ago, our armies are here for only one purpose -- to protect and defend democracy -- and never to take land that is not ours.~~ The only territories ~~we hold~~ <sup>are</sup> the graveyards 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 to respond only after freedom has been lost. We have learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with expansionist intent.

But we try always to prepare for peace. That is why we maintain our defenses and that is why we have tried to negotiate the reduction of arms.

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 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, traditions and beliefs. We are bound by reality: The strength of America's allies is ~~still~~ vital to the ~~future of the~~ United States, And the American security guarantee is ~~still~~ essential to the continued freedom of Europe's democracies. The Allies of 40 years ago are allies still. Your destiny is our destiny, and your hopes are our hopes.

Here, 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; let our actions say to them 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 to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you all very much.

① Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes ~~the~~ the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there.

These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. (continue)

2

All of these men were part of a rollcall of honor, with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armoured divisions, the forces of Free France, the Regiment de Chars de Combat...and you, the American Rangers.

Forty summers have passed since the battle you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs -- some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet you risked everything here. We think of that and we ask: Why did you do it? What impelled you ~~you~~ to put all thought of self-preservation behind and risk your lives to <sup>take these cliffs?</sup> ~~break through the Atlantic Wall~~ What inspired all of the men of the armies that met here?

We look at you...and somehow we know the answer.

It was faith and belief; it ~~was~~ was loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had faith that what they were doing was right, faith that they fought for all humanity, faith that a just ~~God~~ God would grant them mercy on this beachhead -- or the next. (continue)