

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Remarks During a Meeting With National Guard Specialist Aleksander Skarlatos, USA, Airman First Class Spencer Stone, USAF, and Anthony Sadler
September 17, 2015

Well, these three gentlemen really don't need any introduction. I think all of you are familiar with the incredible story of three high school friends who were getting together—two of whom had served in uniform on behalf of the United States Armed Forces—thinking that they were just going to have a fun reunion up in Paris and ended up engaging a potential catastrophic situation and pinning down someone who clearly was intent on doing a lot of harm to a lot of people and inflicting terror on the French people.

Because of their courage, because of their quick thinking, because of their teamwork, it's fair to say that a lot of people were saved and a real calamity was averted. And the French people have already bestowed on them the highest honor that they can—the Legion of Honor—at a ceremony presided over by President Hollande of France. I had an opportunity to talk to him, and he told me that he could not have been more grateful for what these three outstanding young Americans did.

And I just wanted to make sure that, having talked to them on the phone right after the event, that I had a chance to shake their hands in person and tell them what I think they've heard from a lot of people, which is, they represent the very best of America: American character. And it's these kinds of young people who make me extraordinarily optimistic and hopeful about our future.

And I want to thank each and every one of them and wish them well. I'm glad to see that Spencer, apparently, his hand is in pretty good shape and making real progress. And he intends to continue to pursue his work in medicine and caring for people. Anthony is interested in sports medicine and therapy. And Aleksander, as soon as he is finished on "Dancing With the Stars"—[*laughter*—]plans to get into law enforcement.

Whatever they do, they're going to do it well. And we just want to say thank you to them for not only saving so many lives, but also for making America look so good. All right?

Mr. Sadler. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Skarlatos. Thank you.

Mr. Stone. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Come on, let's get one more—we'll get one good picture with everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ayoub El Khazzani, suspected gunman in the August 21 Thalys train attack outside Oignies in Pas-de-Calais, France

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : National Guard Spc. Aleksander Skarlatos, USA, A1C Spencer Stone, USAF, and Anthony Sadler, meeting with President.

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