

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Remarks to United States Troops at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida
December 6, 2016

The President. Hello, MacDill! Thank you so much!

Well, first of all, have you noticed this coincidence? On the scoreboard it says 44 to 44. That happens to be—oh. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you too. I do.

I—to General Votel, General Thomas, and most importantly, to all of you: I am here for a very simple reason, and that is just to say thank you, on behalf of the American people. We have been so reliant on the outstanding work that has been done by SOCOM and CENTCOM, the extraordinary leadership from the highest general down to the person who's just started. I have been consistently in awe of your performance and the way that you've carried out your mission.

As some of you remember, I was here 2 years ago. I want to thank, in addition to some of the outstanding leadership team, a couple of special folks to mention: Colonel April Vogel, Chief Master Sergeant Melanie Noel, all your senior enlisted leaders. Give them a big round of applause.

I know that, obviously, we've got a lot of Air Force here. [*Applause*] We've got Central Command. [*Applause*] We've got Special Operations Command. [*Applause*] We've got Army. [*Applause*] Navy. [*Applause*] Marines. [*Applause*] We've got our DOD civilians. [*Applause*] And we've got spouses, partners, sons, daughters—

Audience member. Family!

The President. What's that?

Audience member. Family.

The President. I was just mentioning them. [*Laughter*] You guys, I was getting to that. [*Laughter*] We've got amazing military families here who are sacrificing alongside of you every single day. Give them a big round of applause.

So I just had the chance to meet with General Thomas and some of the extraordinary personnel from across U.S. Special Operations Command. I'm going to go give a big policy speech right after I talk to you. The main thing I want to do is just shake your hands. And I'm going to try to shake as many hands as I can.

I know you're marking an important anniversary. For 75 years—from World War II through Korea, the Cuban missile crisis, Vietnam, the Gulf war, the Afghan and Iraq wars—the men and women of this base have always stepped up when we needed them most. So on behalf of the entire country, I want to wish you a happy 75th anniversary.

For Michelle and myself, our—the lease is running out on our apartment. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Renew it!

The President. No, I can't. [*Laughter*] So I just want to get my security deposit back. [*Laughter*] But it has been the privilege and honor of a lifetime to be your Commander in Chief—the Commander in Chief of the finest fighting force the world has ever known. You are the best, because we have the best people.

You and your families have inspired us. We've been inspired by your patriotism, for stepping forward, for volunteering, for dedicating yourself to a life of service. We've been inspired by your devotion, your willingness to sacrifice for all of us. We've been inspired by your example. At a time when sometimes the country seems so divided, you remind us that, as Americans, we're all part of one team. We take care of each other. And you remind us of what patriotism really means.

So I just want to say thank you to all of you. You are going to continue with your mission, but I will tell you that Michelle and I, having had the experience and the honor of working with you, are going to make it one of our missions as civilians to support you in every way that we can.

God bless you. God bless our troops. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:34 p.m. in the Basketball Gym. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Joseph L. Votel III, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, USA, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command; and Col. April D. Vogel, USAF, commander, and CMS Melanie K. Noel, USAF, command chief master sergeant, Sixth Air Mobility Wing, MacDill Air Force Base.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : MacDill Air Force Base, FL :: U.S. troops, remarks.

Locations: MacDill Air Force Base, FL.

Names: Noel, Melanie K.; Obama, Michelle; Thomas, Raymond A., III; Vogel, April D.; Votel, Joseph L., III.

Subjects: Air Force, Department of the : MacDill Air Force Base, FL; Armed Forces, U.S. : Military families; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Florida : MacDill Air Force Base; Florida : President's visits.

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