

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks at a Meeting With Medal of Honor Recipients

March 24, 2017

The President. Thank you very much. This is a great honor for me. These are very, very brave people standing behind me. And we're here today to mark Medal of Honor Day, and it is my great privilege and high honor to welcome 25 Medal of Honor recipients to our White House. Very special honor, thank you all very much. I can say officially they are much braver than I am, okay? [*Laughter*] Do you agree with that, General?

Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis. I do, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

Medal of Honor recipient Donald E. Ballard. That's the right answer. [*Laughter*]

The President. That was the right answer.

One-third of the Nation's 75 living Medal of Honor recipients are with us. So it's really—that's a great tribute to all of us, a great tribute to our Nation.

Each of you has risen above and beyond the call of duty in defense of our country, our people, and our flag. You have poured out your hearts, your sweat, and your tears like few others, and your blood—most importantly, your blood—for the United States of America. And we thank you, very much thank you.

You are the soul of our Nation, and a grateful republic salutes you. Constantly, we're saluting you. We have great admiration and respect, believe me. I know what you've been through. We write your names and deeds in our national memory, and we will forever remember—forever, forever and ever—those who did not come home, but who died for the cause of freedom.

I want to thank the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation for preserving the incredible stories of our Medal of Honor heroes for future generations. Done a great job.

In this room hangs the portrait of our 26th President, Theodore Roosevelt. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his courage alongside his band of Rough Riders at the Battle of San Juan Hill. You know about the Rough Riders, right?

Medal of Honor recipients. Yes, sir.

The President. Right? Absolutely. His medal, which is also displayed here, is a reminder of how blessed we truly are to live in the land of heroes. And you are our greatest heroes.

To all of those gathered here today, and to all of those warriors who could not be with us, we thank you. Your acts of valor inspire us, and they show us that there is always someone on the night watch to ensure a bright Sun rises on America each and every morning.

God bless you, God bless our military, and God bless the United States of America.

I want to just thank you very much for being here. It's my great honor.

And as you know, we have David who is doing a great job at the VA. Already, tremendous signs are happening, positive signs. And we have General Mattis who is doing a great job out there on the field, and you see a big difference. It's a lot of difference taking place over the last

6 weeks. So I want to thank General Mattis too. And thank you all, and it's great to have met you.

Oh, look at this.

Medal of Honor Society President Thomas G. Kelly. Mr. President, on behalf of the Medal of Honor Society, I'd like to present a book "Portraits of Valor," which contains all the signatures of the men in the room here, plus about 200 Medal of Honor recipients over the years. Thank you very much.

The President. That is very nice. That is really nice.

So I know these folks would like to stand behind me when I do this, but I don't want to put them in a political situation—[*laughter*—so we're going to talk a little politics. And I think it might be unfair to them, so I'll ask them to—they're going to go over to the Roosevelt Room, and we'll see you a little bit later. We're going to do—unless the press doesn't want to talk politics? Perhaps. [*Laughter*] No? No? Okay, well, they do. But I want to thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:11 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Medal of Honor recipients, meeting with President.

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