

My attitude about this is that there is a great opportunity for us to show the country that Republicans and Democrats are equally as patriotic and equally concerned about the future and that we can work together. Senator Reid and I are both from the West. I'm from west Texas; he's from Nevada. And we tend to speak the same language, pretty plain-spoken people, which should bode well for our relationship.

So I appreciate you all coming. I'm really looking forward to working with you.

[At this point, Sen. Reid made brief remarks.]

*The President.* Thank you, sir. Dick, do you want to say something?

[Sen. Durbin made brief remarks.]

*The President.* I was hoping you would notice that. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:18 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Sens. Reid and Durbin.

## Remarks at the Dedication Ceremony for the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia November 10, 2006

*The President.* Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. General Hagee, thank you for your service to our country—Secretaries of the Army and Navy and Air Force. I'm proud to be here with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pete Pace, the first United States marine to have ever held this position. Senator Warner and Congresswoman Davis; former Governor Warner and former Senator Glenn; honored guests; veterans; General Christmas and all those responsible for this fine museum; United States marines everywhere: Please join me in wishing a very happy Marine Corps birthday to every man and woman who has ever worn the eagle, the globe, and the anchor.

As Jim Lehrer reminded you, we celebrate the 231st birthday of one of the world's premier fighting forces. And we mark the opening of our Nation's most modern military museum. For too long, the only people to have direct experience of the Marine Corps have been the marines themselves and the enemy who's made the mistake of taking them on. The National Museum of the Marine Corps fixes this

problem. In this museum, you will experience life from a marine's perspective. In this museum, you'll feel what it's like to go through boot camp—no, thanks—[laughter]—make an amphibious landing under fire, or deploy from a helicopter in Vietnam.

The museum will not make you into a marine—only a drill instructor can do that—but by putting you in the boots of a marine, this museum will leave you with an appreciation of the rich history of the Corps and the pride that comes with earning the title United States marine.

The history of the Corps is as important to each marine as his rifle. Every marine knows the Corps traces its founding to a Philadelphia tavern in 1775. Every marine can name the famous battles, legends, and heroes that stretch from the halls of Montezuma to the deserts of Iraq. Every marine understands that the Corps' reputation for honor and courage is a sacred inheritance from marines past and a solemn trust to be passed on to marines to come. The marines believe that you cannot know what you stand for if you do not know where

you came from, and they teach their history because they are determined to repeat it.

The history of the Corps is now preserved within these walls. Many of you here today do not need a museum to tell you this history because you wrote it yourselves with your sweat and your sacrifice in places like Tarawa, Chosin, and Khe Sahn. These walls pay tribute to your contributions to American freedom. These walls remind all who visit here that honor, courage, and commitment are not just words. They are core values for a way of life that puts service above self. And these walls will keep the history of the Marine Corps alive for generations of Americans to come. This is an important place, and I thank you for supporting it.

The museum is shaped in the form of the famous photograph of the flag raising on Iwo Jima. Iwo Jima is one of the most important battles in American history. It is fitting that Iwo Jima is one of the most important exhibits in this museum. The Japanese who defended that island had learned from costly battles that they could not defeat American forces. Yet they believed that by inflicting maximum casualties on our forces, they would demoralize our Nation and make America tire of war.

In that battle, the Japanese succeeded in taking the lives of more than 6,000 men. They did not succeed in stopping the marines from achieving their mission. And that flag that was raised on Mount Suribachi would become an enduring symbol of American resolve and a lasting icon of a democracy at war.

The history of the Corps is now being written by a new generation of marines. Since the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, more than 190,000 men and women have stepped forward to wear the uniform of the Marine Corps. Like the marines who have come before them, this new generation is serving freedom's cause in distant lands. Like the marines who have come before them, this new generation faces determined enemies. And like the marines

who have come before them, this new generation is adding its own chapters to the stories of liberty and peace. And years from now, when America looks out on a democratic Middle East growing in freedom and prosperity, Americans will speak of the battles like Fallujah with the same awe and reverence that we now give to Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima.

Like the marines who have come before them, this new generation has also given some of its finest men in the line of duty. One of these fine men was Jason Dunham. Jason's birthday is November the 10th, so you might say that he was born to be a marine. And as far back as boot camp, his superiors spotted the quality that would mark this young American as an outstanding marine: his willingness to put the needs of others before his own.

Corporal Dunham showed that spirit in April 2004, while leading a patrol of his marines in an Iraqi town near the Syrian border. When a nearby Marine convoy was ambushed, Corporal Dunham led his squad to the site of the attack, where he and his men stopped a convoy of cars that were trying to make an escape. As he moved to search one of the vehicles, an insurgent jumped out and grabbed the corporal by the throat. The corporal engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. At one point he shouted to his fellow marines, "No, no, no, watch his hand." Moments later, an enemy grenade rolled out. Corporal Dunham did not hesitate; he jumped on the grenade to protect his fellow marines; he used his helmet and his body to absorb the blast.

A friend who was there that terrible day put it this way: "Corporal Dunham had a gift from God. Everyone who came in contact with him wanted to be like him. He was the toughest marine but the nicest guy. He would do anything for you. Corporal Dunham was the kind of person everybody wants as their best friend." Despite surviving the initial blast and being given the

best of medical care, Corporal Dunham ultimately succumbed to his wounds. And by giving his own life, Corporal Dunham saved the lives of two of his men and showed the world what it means to be a marine.

Corporal Dunham's mom and dad are with us today on what would have been this brave young man's 25th birthday. We remember that the marine who so freely gave his life was your beloved son. We ask a loving God to comfort you for a loss that can never be replaced. And on this special birthday, in the company of his fellow marines, I'm proud to announce that our Nation will recognize Corporal Jason Dunham's action with America's highest decoration for valor, the Medal of Honor.

As long as we have marines like Corporal Dunham, America will never fear for her

liberty. And as long as we have this fine museum, America will never forget their sacrifice.

May God bless you, may God bless the Marines, and may God bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Mark R. Warner of Virginia; former Sen. John H. Glenn, Jr.; Lt. Gen. G.R. Christmas, USMC (Ret.), president, Marine Corps Heritage Foundation; Jim Lehrer, anchor of PBS's "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer"; and Dan and Deb Dunham, parents of Corp. Jason Dunham, USMC, who was killed near Husaybah, Iraq, on April 14, 2004.

## The President's Radio Address *November 11, 2006*

Good morning. This weekend, we commemorate Veterans Day, a day when America honors every man and woman who has worn the uniform of our military. In Veterans Day celebrations across our Nation, we remember those who have served in previous wars, those who are serving today, and those who did not live to become veterans. Especially in a time of war, we see in our veterans an example of people who stepped forward to serve a cause larger than themselves. This weekend, I ask you to take a moment to thank our veterans for their service and express your appreciation for the sacrifices they have made to preserve our freedom and way of life.

One freedom that defines our way of life is the freedom to choose our leaders at the ballot box. We saw that freedom earlier this week, when millions of Americans went to the polls to cast their votes for a new Congress. Whatever your opinion of the outcome, all Americans can take

pride in the example our democracy sets for the world by holding elections even in a time of war. Our democratic institutions are a source of strength, and our trust in these institutions has made America the most powerful, prosperous, and stable nation in the world.

As a result of this week's elections, the Democrats now hold a majority in both Houses of Congress. After the elections, I called the Democratic leaders in the House and the Senate to congratulate them on the victory they achieved for their party. On Thursday, I had lunch with Congresswoman Pelosi and Congressman Hoyer, and on Friday, I met with Senators Reid and Durbin. We had good discussions. I told them what I have told the men and women in my administration: We must put these elections behind us and work together on the great issues facing America.

The elections will bring changes to Washington. But one thing has not