

SPEECH BY:

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OLE SOLDIERS REUNION
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LET ME TELL YOU HOW VERY PLEASED I AM TO BE WITH YOU TODAY FOR THIS SPECIAL OCCASION. IT IS A THRILL TO FEEL THE SPIRIT OF UNITY AND BROTHERHOOD AMONG THE PEOPLE OF CATAWBA COUNTY WHO HAVE GATHERED TO CELEBRATE THIS EVENT.

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS SINCE THE CIVIL WAR, THE SPECIAL MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "OLE SOLDIERS REUNION" HAS INCREASED EACH YEAR. WE CELEBRATE TODAY NOT ONLY THE PATRIOTISM THAT CONTINUES TO DRAW SOLDIERS TO THE DEFENSE OF AMERICA, BUT ALSO THE MANY IDEALS AND VALUES THAT MAKE SUCH PATRIOTISM A CONTINUING TRIBUTE TO THE FREEDOM EXISTING IN AMERICA.

IT IS AN HONOR FOR ME TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK AT THIS TIME, FOR I AM PROUD OF THE HIGH STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE WHICH HAVE ALWAYS DIGNIFIED THE NORTH CAROLINA SOLDIER. I HAVE SERVED IN THE MILITARY AND CONTINUE TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE AIR FORCE RESERVES. I THINK THAT THIS EXPERIENCE ENABLES ME TO APPRECIATE EVEN FURTHER THE SACRIFICES AMERICAN FIGHTING MEN HAVE MADE IN DEFENSE OF THE FREEDOMS THEY SO OBVIOUSLY CHERISH.

STANDING HERE TODAY, I AM REMINDED OF MY AFFECTION FOR MY HOMETOWN OF LILLINGTON AND I AM STRUCK BY THE "GRASS-ROOTS

PATRIOTISM" SO PREVALENT IN SMALL TOWNS SUCH AS LILLINGTON AND NEWTON, PRESIDENT EISENHOWER ALSO RECOGNIZED THE VIRTUE AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE SMALL TOWN CITIZEN, FOR HE SAID:

"I THINK FOR ANY AMERICAN WHO HAD THE GREAT AND PRICELESS PRIVILEGE OF BEING RAISED IN A SMALL TOWN, THERE REMAINS ALWAYS WITH HIM (FOND) MEMORIES OF THOSE DAYS, AND THE OLDER HE GROWS, THE MORE HE SENSES WHAT HE OWED TO THE SIMPLE HONESTY, THE NEIGHBORLINESS, THE INTEGRITY THAT HE SAW ALL AROUND HIM, IN THOSE DAYS, AND TOOK FOR GRANTED, AND THAT HE LEARNS TO APPRECIATE ONLY AS HE GROWS OLDER AND DWELLS MORE IN OTHER PLACES OF THE EARTH."

THE SIMPLE HONESTY AND FRIENDSHIP -- THE SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD AND COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT THAT THE PRESIDENT SAW IN THE SMALL TOWNS ARE THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF OUR COUNTRY, THE EARLY SETTLERS OF THE COLONIES HAD TO UNITE AND COOPERATE IN ORDER TO MEET AND CONQUER THE PERILS OF THE WILDERNESS. IN LATER YEARS, AS THEY BEGAN TO BECOME MORE DEPENDENT UPON ONE ANOTHER, THEY ANSWERED AS ONE THE CALL OF HONOR AND DUTY AND UNITED BEHIND A SINGLE IDEAL IN THE TRUE SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE TO THROW OFF THE YOKE OF TYRANNY AND LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR COUNTRY.

THIS SAME SPIRIT OF '76 KEPT OUR NATION TOGETHER THROUGH ONE CIVIL WAR, TWO WORLD WARS, AND NUMEROUS OTHER CONFLICTS.

BUT WHAT IS IT THAT HAS ALLOWED A DEMOCRATIC IDEAL SUCH AS OURS TO SURVIVE AND FLOURISH? WHAT IS IT ABOUT OUR AMERICAN

WAY OF LIFE WHICH CAUSES US TO PAY TRIBUTE TO IT AND HAS FOSTERED THE KIND OF SPIRIT WE ALL FEEL HERE TODAY?

FIRST OF ALL, WE MUST ALL RECOGNIZE THAT DEMOCRACY WAS NOT IN THE BEGINNING A GIFT, NOR IS IT NOW. IT WAS WON OUT OF THE ANGUISH OF AN ENSLAVED PEOPLE; IT WAS WON OUT OF MAN'S LONG CHERISHED HOPES TO BE FREE. IT WAS WON BY THE BRAVE DEEDS AND SIMPLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MEN FROM TOWNS LIKE LILLINGTON AND NEWTON WHICH NEVER RECEIVED NATIONAL ATTENTION BUT NEVERTHELESS ARE STAMPED AS "PROFILES OF COURAGE" IN THE MINDS OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU IN SMALL TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THESE UNITED STATES.

I THINK WE SHOULD REMEMBER ALSO THAT OUR GOVERNMENT IS KNOWN AS A "REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY", BECAUSE IT IS A GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE PEOPLE -- THE CITIZENS -- REMAIN SUPREME, SINCE ITS OFFICIALS REMAIN RESPONSIBLE TO THE PEOPLE AND CAN BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE -- PEACEFULLY, WITHOUT THREATS, WITHOUT VIOLENCE AND WITHOUT VIOLATION OF OUR LAWS -- WHENEVER THE PEOPLE SO DESIRE.

THIS IS THE WAY IT SHOULD BE. GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO BE CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE PEOPLE SO THAT WHEN THE SHOE PINCHES, THE PEOPLE CAN GET SOME RELIEF. NOTHING CAUSES MY BLOOD TO BOIL ANY FASTER THAN WORTHLESS RED-TAPE AND GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRATS WHO IGNORE THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE.

YOU KNOW WINSTON CHURCHILL ONCE SAID THAT THOUGH DEMOCRACY IS NOT PERFECT, HE HAD NEVER BEEN SHOWN ANYTHING WHICH WAS

BETTER. I AGREE WITH HIM.

WHEN WE SALUTE THE FLAG, WE SAY THE WORDS, "WITH JUSTICE FOR ALL." WE IN AMERICA HAVE TRIED OUT BEST TO ESTABLISH JUST GOVERNMENT. IT CANNOT ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEE TO AMERICANS FREEDOM FROM ALL ABUSE, BUT IT DOES PROVIDE MEANS OF REDRESS DESIGNED IN EVERY WAY TO PROTECT THE INDIVIDUAL. THAT THIS IS SO, CAN EASILY BE SEEN WHEN ONE REMEMBERS THE BILL OF RIGHTS AND THE NUMEROUS RECENT JUDICIAL DECISIONS BASED UPON IT. THE COURTS TODAY...AS NEVER BEFORE...ARE INTERESTED IN PROTECTING THE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS AND THE RIGHTS OF THE UNDERPRIVILEGED, THE INDIGENT, THE DISADVANTAGED AND MEMBERS OF MINORITY RACES.

THE CONSTITUTIONS OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND NORTH CAROLINA GUARANTEE THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE TOGETHER PEACEABLY TO CONSULT FOR THEIR COMMON GOOD, TO INSTRUCT THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR REDRESS OF THEIR GRIEVANCES AND TO VOTE THEIR REPRESENTATIVES OUT OF OFFICE WHENEVER THEY FAIL TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES TO THE VOTERS' SATISFACTION. THESE ARE THE METHODS OF DEMOCRACY AND WHENEVER SUCH METHODS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE PEOPLE, NO MAN NEEDS TO TURN TO THREATS AND VIOLENCE AS MEANS OF PROTEST.

MANY NATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN FOUNDED SINCE OURS HAVE MADE AN ATTEMPT TO COPY THIS AMERICAN TRADITION. MOST CONSTITUTIONS NOW IN EFFECT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD -- EVEN IN THE SOVIET UNION -- CONTAIN SO-CALLED BILLS OF RIGHTS. BUT

THE ROLE OF PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN MANY OF THESE NATIONS COMES SECOND TO ENHANCING THE WELFARE TO THE STATE. IN THOSE NATIONS, THE DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP FAR OUTWEIGH ITS PRIVILEGES.

WE KNOW THAT IN NATIONS BEHIND THE IRON AND BAMBOO CURTAINS, THE LIVES OF CITIZENS ARE REGIMENTED TO SUPPLY THE NEEDS OF THE STATE. WE KNOW THAT MEN CANNOT CHOOSE THEIR OCCUPATIONS THERE, THAT MEN CANNOT TRAVEL FREELY THERE, AND THAT MEN THERE CANNOT SAY WHAT THEY BELIEVE UNLESS WHAT THEY BELIEVE HAPPENS TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THEIR NATION.

WE KNOW HOW SOVIET WRITERS ARE TRIED FOR TREASON, HOW THE BERLIN WALL WAS BUILT TO PREVENT THE CITIZENS OF EAST GERMANY FROM LEAVING THAT COUNTRY, AND HOW THE CUBAN AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS FORCE PEOPLE INTO THE FIELDS TO HARVEST SUGAR AND RICE. TO BE PATRIOTIC IN THESE COMMUNIST NATIONS, A PERSON MUST PERFORM WHAT THE GOVERNMENT PRESCRIBES AS DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP WHETHER OR NOT THEY CONFLICT WITH HIS RIGHTS. A CITIZEN WHO FAILS TO PERFORM THESE DUTIES IS TO THAT EXTENT A TRAITOR.

WE ALL KNOW THE RIDICULOUS LENGTHS TO WHICH THESE DUTIES ARE STRETCHED IN COMMUNIST NATIONS, BUT WE OURSELVES SOMETIMES MARVEL AT THE ZEAL OF CITIZENS THERE AND WONDER WHY OUR CITIZENS DO NOT RESPOND WITH EQUAL ZEAL. WHEN NINETY-NINE AND THREE-QUARTERS PER CENT OF THE ELECTORATE IN THE SOVIET UNION VOTES IN AN ELECTION IN WHICH THERE IS LITTLE CHOICE,

WE OFTEN WONDER WHY OUR CITIZENS DO NOT TURN OUT IN EQUAL NUMBERS TO VOTE IN ELECTIONS WHICH PRESENT A LARGE MEASURE OF CHOICE. WE SHRUG IT OFF AS APATHY.

WHEN MILLIONS OF CHINESE MARCHED THROUGH THE STREETS OF PEKING CHANTING SLOGANS FROM THE "LITTLE RED BOOK" OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S WRITINGS, WE WONDERED WHY WE AMERICANS CANNOT GATHER TO RECITE THE GREAT MAXIMS OF FREEDOM UPON WHICH THIS NATION WAS FOUNDED. PROBABLY WE SHRUGGED IT OFF AS INDIFFERENCE.

AND WHEN WHOLE NATIONS SEEM TO UNANIMOUSLY BELIEVE IN THE IDEOLOGIES OF MARX, LENIN, STALIN AND MAO, WE WONDER WHY WE AMERICANS CANNOT BE UNANIMOUS IN OUR BELIEF IN THE IDEOLOGIES OF JEFFERSON AND JACKSON, WASHINGTON AND LINCOLN, PATRICK HENRY AND ALL THOSE OTHER GREAT AMERICANS WHO HAVE DONE SO MUCH TO MOLD THE CHARACTER OF OUR LAND.

WE WONDER ABOUT THESE THINGS BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT OUR ELECTIONS REPRESENT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE MORE TRULY THAN DO THOSE IN THE SOVIET UNION, WE KNOW THAT OUR SLOGANS ARE AS INSPIRING AS THOSE OF MAO, AND WE KNOW THAT OUR IDEOLOGIES ARE TRUER THAN THEIRS.

YET, WE SOMETIMES CONCLUDE FROM ALL THIS THAT WE AMERICANS ARE NOT A VERY PATRIOTIC PEOPLE AND THAT WE DO NOT TAKE THE DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP SERIOUSLY. AND OTHERS -- ESPECIALLY OUR COMMUNIST ADVERSARIES -- SEE US ACT AS WE DO AND CONCLUDE THAT WE ARE "PAPER TIGERS" AND THAT THEY WILL "BURY US." BUT WHENEVER ANYONE CONCLUDES THIS, THEY GREATLY MISJUDGE US.

WE ARE NOT "PAPER TIGERS" AND I DO NOT BELIEVE OUR INDIVIDUALISM WILL EVER BECOME OUR DOWNFALL.

YOU KNOW WITHIN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF TRAVELING FROM ONE SIDE OF NORTH CAROLINA TO THE OTHER. ONE MORNING I WAS IN WILMINGTON WITH PEOPLE WHO WERE BORN AND RAISED ON THE ATLANTIC COAST AND THAT AFTERNOON I WAS IN A HOLLOW IN AVERY COUNTY WITH PEOPLE WHOSE FAMILIES FOR GENERATIONS HAD LIVED IN THE HEART OF THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS.

THOSE PEOPLE LIVED HUNDREDS OF MILES APART AND LET ME TELL YOU RIGHT NOW THERE WAS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE MOUNTAINEERS AND THOSE FISHERMEN. THEY ALL WERE INDEPENDENT PEOPLE AND THEY ALL HAD THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL NOTIONS ABOUT HOW THINGS OUGHT TO GO AND HOW GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO BE RUN.

SO IT IS EASY FOR ME TODAY TO UNDERSTAND WHY OUR DETRACTORS -- THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE AMERICA FAIL -- WOULD THINK THAT OUR DIFFERENCES ARE GREATER THAN OUR COMMON BONDS AND THAT A NATION AS DIVERSE AS OURS CANNOT LAST.

BUT THEY SIMPLY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF OUR SOCIETY AND OUR PEOPLE. THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS OUR NATURE TO HAVE OUR DIFFERENCES AND ENJOY THEM. THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT ALL AMERICANS WILL NEVER MARCH TO THE TUNE OF ANY SINGLE PIPER OR CHANT FROM ANYONE'S LITTLE RED BOOK. THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT AMERICANS DO NOT HAVE TO DRESS ALIKE, TALK ALIKE, LOOK ALIKE, SHARE THE SAME LIFE STYLE OR EVEN GO TO THE POLLS IN MASSES IN ORDER TO APPRECIATE THE

FREEDOMS WE ENJOY AND TO RALLY TO THEIR DEFENSE IN TIME OF PERIL. IT MIGHT WELL BE THAT WE ARE SO UNIQUE IN THIS RESPECT THAT YOU HAVE TO BE AMERICAN TO UNDERSTAND IT,

YOU KNOW, IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT IN OUR DAY WE SHOULD CEASE TO TAKE OURSELVES, SO SERIOUSLY AND BEGIN TO TAKE OUR DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP AND OUR POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES SERIOUSLY. THERE IS A LOT OF TRUTH TO THIS STATEMENT. DEMOCRACY AND ITS METHODS CAN ONLY WORK WHEN THE CITIZENS OF A NATION TAKE THEIR POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES SERIOUSLY; WHEN THEY NOT ONLY HAVE RESPECT FOR, BUT TAKE A PART IN POLITICS; WHEN THEY NOT ONLY CRITICIZE, BUT MAKE CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS; WHEN THEY FORMULATE AND PRESENT REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES; WHEN THEY ENCOURAGE THEIR BEST TO SEEK POLITICAL OFFICE AND THEN PROVIDE THE PUBLIC SUPPORT NECESSARY FOR THEM TO SERVE EFFECTIVELY,

LET US RESOLVE HERE TODAY TO DO THESE THINGS. LET US REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE LOVE AND SERVICE OF THIS REPUBLIC AND ITS FLAG. WE AMERICANS, THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMUNITY, ARE A DIVERSE PEOPLE. THIS NATION IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE, A MELTINGPOT. THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC WAS FORMED BY LOVERS OF LIBERTY FROM ALL LANDS. BUT WE STAND TOGETHER AS CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES... A GLORIOUS COUNTRY, A GREAT FLAG, THE EMBLEM OF ALL THAT WE ARE OR HOPE TO BE, OUR PROTECTION IN WAR, OUR GUARDIAN IN PEACE AND OUR HOPE AT ALL TIMES,

LET US MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR WHAT HAS PASSED IN OUR

LIVES BUT LET US MAKE GREAT PROMISES FOR THE FUTURE. WE LOVE THE HEROIC DEEDS OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US AND HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE STRENGTH OF THE AMERICAN CHARACTER, THE FABRIC OF THE AMERICAN FLAG. WE CANNOT FORGET, WE SHALL NOT FORGET, THEIR SUFFERINGS, THEIR TRIALS, THEIR TRIUMPHS AND THEIR FAITHFULNESS. OUR NATION AND SMALL COMMUNITIES SUCH AS THIS ONE REST ON THE BEDROCK OF THEIR DEEDS.

WE MUST TRY HARD NOT TO FORGET THIS GREATNESS OF AMERICA EVEN WHEN WE ARE SOMETIMES TEMPTED TO. IF WE ARE TO BE TRUE TO OUR HERITAGE, WE MUST NOT LET EXTREME ACTIONS LIKE DRAFT-CARD BURNING OR THE WAVING OF VIET CONG FLAGS MAKE US FORGET THAT WE AMERICANS ARE FREE IN A WAY THAT FEW PEOPLE ARE FREE ANYWHERE ELSE UPON THIS EARTH AND IN A WAY THAT NO ONE IS FREE IN COMMUNIST CONTROLLED LANDS.

THE PROOF OF WHETHER OR NOT ONE IS TRULY A PATRIOTIC AMERICAN IS THE EXTENT OF HIS LOVE OF AND DEVOTION TO FREEDOM -- HIS OWN AND EVERYONE ELSE'S. IT IS NOT THE BOOM OF OUR RHETORIC THAT MATTERS NOR THE SIZE OF OUR DEMONSTRATIONS BUT RATHER THE EXTENT OF OUR RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS. THE TRUE TEST OF AMERICAN PATRIOTISM IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE AS INDIVIDUALS ARE WILLING TO GO IN DEFENDING FREEDOM FROM ATTACK, BOTH FROM WITHIN OUR LAND AND FROM BEYOND ITS BORDERS.

DEVOTION TO FREEDOM IS A COMPLEX DEVOTION; IT IS NOT SIMPLE MINDED AS IS THE DEVOTION OF SOME NATIONS TO CONFORMITY BY ALL ITS PEOPLE. FOR FREEDOM IN ITSELF SOMETIMES TENDS TO

BE DIVISIVE AND SPAWN UNREST AND DISSENSION AND EVEN REPRESSION. THUS FREEDOM IS A TENDER OBJECT WHICH NEEDS TO BE HANDLED WITH CARE. WE CANNOT ABUSE IT -- AS EXTREMISTS SOMETIMES DO -- FOR FREEDOM IS FRAGILE. WE CANNOT REPRESS IT -- AS TOTALITARIANS DO -- FOR FREEDOM IS DESTRUCTIBLE. WE CAN ONLY LOVE IT -- AS WE WOULD A CHILD -- AND PROTECT IT...AND NURTURE IT ... SOMETIMES TOLERATE IT ... BUT ALWAYS HONOR IT.

I AM GLAD THAT YOU CITIZENS OF NEWTON HAVE SEEN FIT TO COME TOGETHER FOR AN OCCASION SUCH AS THIS ONE. I HOPE THAT EVERY TIME YOU DO YOU WILL REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE COME BEFORE YOU AND CONTRIBUTED IN SO MANY WAYS TO THE STRENGTH OF OUR NATION, STATE AND COMMUNITY. AND I HOPE YOU WILL DEDICATE YOURSELVES TO MAINTAINING THIS SAME TRADITION OF INTEREST IN YOUR FELLOWMAN.