

Dedication Speech

May 28, 1995

This is a day to honor our country's fallen heroes and, at long last, the day we dedicate this memorial, a tribute to their sacrifice.

So many have given so much to make this day possible. To so many, I must say thank you for your commitment to this memorial for without you, it would not have happened. The words do not exist to express my gratitude.

The memorial as you see it today will most likely have a different appearance as time goes on. It is a living thing, grown from a simple idea. It has a message. Anna Carroll has given it life with her moving mural, and the statues yet to come will tell a story once placed upon the hill. The names etched in granite have given it its voice. Yes, this memorial is a living thing even if molded from granite and earth. Come some silent evening and sit, listen . . . it will speak to you. The mind is a wonderful thing. It is where dreams are made and memories live.

There are no greater heroes than those whose names appear on this wall and on memorials across this great land of ours. Be proud of them and their sacrifice. Their memory must live on if this country is to remain the land of the free. It is because these young men and women — our country's best — take an oath to defend this country and its principals. They say, "I love this country so much that I will give my life for it." They are this country's elite few and because of their sacrifice all Americans can enjoy the freedom they vow to protect. Because, my friends, freedom is not free . . . someone has paid the price that others take for granted. For those who fought for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.

Today, proudly, we honor all those of our Armed Forces from all wars who gave their lives. Their courage was our greatest triumph, their sacrifice our greatest loss.

I would like to say for those who no longer have a voice of their own, thank you. Thank you for remembering. And God bless America, land that they loved.

Thomas A. Luberda
President, L.V.M.F.