



Department of Justice

REMARKS

BY

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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

AT THE

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION SPECIAL AGENTS

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I am honored to join you this morning in remembering our fallen DEA Agents. Today we salute the devotion and recall the courage and achievements of those Agents who have given their lives to the cause of justice in the line of duty. It is often said that none of us really dies so long as we are remembered. In that spirit we remember those we honor today -- to acknowledge their sacrifice and guard their legacy.

As President Bush observed in this year's State of the Union address, "Americans know that leadership brings burdens and requires sacrifice." He spoke in the midst of Operation Desert Storm, as our nation faced a test of our commitment to the rule of law. The leadership of which he spoke -- and that same sacrifice -- are also required of those who labor in the fight to protect what I have always regarded as the first civil right of every American -- the right to be free from fear in our homes, on our streets and in our communities.

Sadly, preservation of this right sometimes takes its toll, and I am reminded of where Abraham Lincoln said our duty lies on such occasions. He said, in his Gettysburg Address:

"It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. . . .that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

America is now engaged in a domestic conflict of deadly proportions and great malevolence -- a conflict to preserve our citizens from the fear induced by drug trafficking and its inevitable ally of violence. You, the agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration, are our armed forces on the frontlines of that pitched battle. Indeed, as preserving the rule of law was the summons to arms during the War in the Gulf -- so it must also be the call to action in our war on drugs.

Each name on your Memorial Honor Roll represents a life given to uphold the rule of law. Today we respectfully add a name to that roll and account for the life of DEA Special Agent and Marine Corps Major Eugene Thomas McCarthy. Special Agent McCarthy decided at a young age to dedicate his life to service of his country. Early last February, that life ended in service of his country. When the battle was joined in Iraq, Special Agent McCarthy left one dangerous post -- flying missions over Peru in Operation Snowcap -- to fly over the Persian Gulf with Marine Attack Heli-Squadron 775. The crash of his Cobra gunship claimed a life marked by devotion to the DEA and the principles for which it stands.

I would like to offer my sympathy to his parents and family, as well as my deepest thanks to all Agency employees who are with us today. Our hearts especially go out to the families of all

those we memorialize. Our hope for a drug-free society depends upon those who know and accept the risks of defending the rule of law against the violent criminals who would subvert it in pursuit of bloody profit. We salute the collective courage of all who participate in DEA's mission. You have chosen a hard and dangerous vocation -- serving the cause of justice -- wherever that cause might lead.

Such a standard of courage and dedication is represented -- in the last full measure -- by Eugene McCarthy and all the agents we remember today. In our hearts, and in our service to justice, we should remember -- not just on this annual memorial -- but each day -- the resolve which President Lincoln so simply put, "...That these dead shall not have died in vain." That standard brought to bear in the fight against criminal enterprise will ensure the ultimate triumph of the rule of law over the worldwide drug trade and all those who seek to profit by it.

May God bless the memory of those whom we honor today.