



**Address of
Governor William J. Janklow**

**South Dakota's World War II
Memorial Dedication**

September 15, 2001

Thank you. You know, there are no flags burning in America today. There are no people in America today that argue against or are ashamed to talk about prayer in public institutions, in our workplaces, in our halls of government, in our halls of Congress and our legislatures and our city councils. There are people today that no longer, no longer are willing to stand aside while others defile this flag and all of those that have fought for it.

I've got a friend that's not with us now, Monsignor Sampson from Sioux Falls. He grew from humble beginnings, joined the armed forces in the Second World War as a Chaplain, was one of the first people to jump out over Normandy with the 101st Airborne Division, unarmed as a Chaplain of faith for the men who jumped over Normandy. As we visited, he said, "Bill, I tell you what I've heard many others say. I've never, ever met an atheist in a foxhole."

We all understand what that means today. Today, I stand before you darned proud to be an American and a citizen of this country.

You know, when we talk about memorials, what we're really talking about is remembering and teaching what those of you who are soon to leave will leave behind.

I was embarrassed when I found out that we didn't have a World War II Memorial. I just always assumed we did. But let me tell you, my friends, I was visiting with a lady who's been a friend of mine for several decades. She's never married. She spent her life as a school teacher in the communities of South Dakota. As I was visiting with her one day, she and a bunch of her lady friends, I, all of a sudden, said to her, "How come you never got married? You're one of the neatest people I know." All of a sudden when I said it, I just felt so embarrassed. You know, at times I say things I shouldn't at the wrong time, and I was just humiliated and embarrassed, because I'd said that to somebody who had never married, and she was an old lady.

She looked down and she said, "Oh, Bill, it was just never to be," and she then left the room. I stood there humiliated and embarrassed and tried to make conversation with some of her friends. I was thinking of going down and talking to her, and I didn't know what to say. I was trying to get up my nerve to speak to her, and all of a sudden I saw her come back in the room. She walked over to the table I was at, and she had a little pouch, and she opened it, and she laid it on the table. There was a diamond ring with a tiny little diamond--an engagement ring.

I said, "You were married."

She said, "No, Bill. I was engaged, and the next day he went off to war, and he has never come home. And you know, there was just never anybody else for me."

As I was driving home, I was sick. And all of a sudden I decided he and all the people like him are going to have their memorial. We who forget so easily that you've given so much will never be allowed to forget again--ever--ever.

I'm sick and tired of going to you veterans' funerals. I'm tired of it. I go to your funerals, and people get up and say nice things about you, and your casket's covered with the flag of this country. Then we go out to the cemetery after people have said all these nice things, and they fold the flag, and they play Taps, and they present it to the family, and they shoot the rifles. All of a sudden I realized we wait until you are gone to tell you what we think of you.

My mother's got the best line in the world, God bless her, at 88. We've got a pretty good sized family, and every time we get together she says the same thing. "You know, you kids, if you don't bother coming to see me while I'm here, don't show up when I'm gone." It's the best line in the world, the best line in the world.

I looked at this weather this morning that God gave us, and yes, I wish it could be 75 degrees and the sun shining, and we were all sitting here in the warmth. All of a sudden I thought--this morning, as I stood in that parade when it started to drizzle--God gave us the kind of day that every one of you faced so often in this war you fought a long time ago. You had very, very few days when it was 75 degrees and the sun was shining. You had comrades that froze to death at the Battle of the Bulge. You slogged through the mud and the mire of the Pacific beaches. You fought your way across the hedgerows of Germany. You fought your way across North Africa. You fought out on the seas in typhoons and hurricanes. You fought, you did your duty, and you never worried about the weather. And we aren't going to worry about the weather today. God just gave you what you are used to and what we're not used to for today's day, that's all.

There're many of you today who are not here. You're not here. I'd have given anything if I could have had every single one of you from World War II here today, but you're in nursing homes. You're in hospitals. You're home, and you can't walk. I've got a friend here today named Ted Spaulding. Ted retired a general. He'll be a hero for me as long as I live, and I never even got to meet him until I was in my forties. Ted was a young person on the island of Bataan, way back in 1941-42. When they surrendered, he decided to put together a guerilla army and fight and was ordered to surrender because a surrender had been agreed upon. Ted was one of those people that walked every foot of the Bataan Death March, where over 10,000 American soldiers and Filipino soldiers were killed being forcibly marched, bayoneted and garroted and shot and drowned in the mud across the island of Bataan. I called him and I said, "Ted, you've got to come to this."

He said, "Bill, I can't walk to the kitchen."

I said, "I will see that you are picked up and transported to Pierre." Yesterday they called and said Ted would be here today.

I know a lot of you aren't here today. I called a gentleman in Sioux Falls the other day. A friend got a hold of me from Parkston. I called him; he was in the hospital. I asked him to come. He said, "Governor, I'm dying, but I am going to live until Saturday when they dedicate my memorial."

I said, "Sir, I will see that you are brought to Pierre. I want you to see it."

He said, "I can't see anymore; I'm blind. But I'll listen to it on the radio, and I promise you I'm not going to die until after Saturday." He had this weakness in his voice, and he's the one that's strong, and I'm the one that's weak. It's backwards for a change.

So many people have contributed to this day. Over 8000 of you have written checks, over 8000 South Dakotans from the Girl Scouts in Pierre to the students at the Crow Creek School to individuals and

businesses across the length and breadth of this state. You've built this memorial. I get the credit, but you've done the work. You've built the memorial. You folks in Pierre and you folks in Fort Pierre, Stanley and Hughes Counties, you state employees, the South Dakota Army and Air Guard, the Highway Patrol, all of you men and women that have worked today, all of you students that have come here today with your bands to march on this rainy day, you clearly could have done other things. But you came today to say what all of us have never said enough--thank you to this generation that grew up in the Great Depression. Thank you to this generation that went off to war fighting someplace else so they would never have to fight here. Thank you.

Today, it's different. Today, this country is at war again. You know, sometimes we're a little slow in America. Sometimes we try so hard to think that we can reason and that we can deal and that we can negotiate that we forget that there are people out to destroy us and our way of life.

When they blew up our Marine barracks many years ago, after a little bit of outrage, we ignored it, these people that were at war with us. And then they took our entire embassy hostage in Iran, some other people who were at war with us. Yes, we had outrage and we put the yellow ribbons around, but it wasn't very long and we forgot about that. Then they blew up our embassy in the Sudan, and then they blew up our embassy in Kenya, and we forgot about that. And then they shot down the people in the Frankfurt airport, all those Americans they killed, and we forgot about that. Then they attacked the USS Cole in Yemen. They blew up that ship and killed so many of our sailors, and we've just been in the process of forgetting about that. And they tried to blow up our World Trade Center several years ago. No, these people aren't from one country. They're from a lot of countries, and they're harbored and sheltered by those who run the governments of places like Syria and Iraq and Iran and Yemen and North Korea. They are harbored by countries like Afghanistan. We've reached the point, now that it was driven home to us in living color, the senseless, wanton destruction of people that were innocent.

There is no defense for Pearl Harbor, but it was one nation attacking another nation, one military against another military. But these folks, oh, they're afraid to take on our military, so they take on our babies that are still being fed by their mothers. They take on the old and the infirm that are in wheelchairs. They take on people who are sitting at their desks in their offices.

No, these warriors of today that have declared war on America, they are people who believe they can destroy our will as a people. They've made a mistake. They've made a mistake. They've done something no human being in this country has been able to do since the Second World War ended. They have united every human being in the United States of America--every man, woman, and child; every Protestant, Catholic, Jew, and Moslem; every person that was born red, yellow, black, or white, or some mixture; every person of every gender and every age and every geographical location. Yes, they've done something no politician has been able to do. They have unified the American people, and now, although this will be a war that will take a lengthy period of time and there are going to be casualties, the days of trying to arrest people and bring them to trial are over. At war, you kill the enemy and you kill their way of life. What a terrible way to talk, but that's the way you folks had to live a long time ago.

When they unveil this today, and I've not seen it, I've only seen the statues and the pictures, and I've spent a lot of time with the artists, but let me tell you my friends, let me tell you. When I look at that soldier, I'm going to see my cousin Irving from Chicago, a little Jewish boy who went off to war when he was young. I know others will see Mr. Untereiner from Dimock. Others will see Bechen from Flandreau, or Heggebauer from Rapid City. All of you will see someone, as I see someone, when you look at it. When I look at that sailor, I will see my Uncle Claude or my Uncle Gordon or my Uncle Oliver, my mother's brothers who went off to the United States Navy. But you will all see John Waldron from Fort Pierre or somebody from Faulkton, South Dakota, Mr. Melius, a Pearl Harbor survivor, or thousands and thousands of other people. We're all going to see different folks, and we're all going to see the same folks when we look into the eyes of that memorial.

Yes, when I look at that Marine, I'm going to see every Marine that I've ever known. Yes, I'm a proud member of the United States Marine Corps, but I'm just as proud of my father who served in the United

States Army and died wearing that uniform and my step-father who was in the 147th and went off to war with an awful lot of you a long time ago.

When I look at that airman, every time I do, that man from the Army Air Corps, I see Joe Foss. I see this young farm kid from Sioux Falls who went off to war and in less than fifty days shot down twenty-six enemy airplanes. Then they brought him home from the war to sell war bonds. And Joe Foss, I said to him one time, "Joe, what did you think about being brought home?"

He said, "Janklow, if that damn Roosevelt would have let me, Pappy Boyington and I would have shot down the whole Japanese Air Force." Joe epitomized all of you. He epitomized each and every one of you.

We talk about courage, really we talk about courage. When you think about history and these words like courage and duty and honor and sacrifice and all these various words, I can't help but think of this memorial. You see, as I look at this memorial, and as I look at it every day, I'm going to know it represents deeds that you and a lot of folks like you have done that we don't see anymore. We don't see those deeds anymore, and when you can't see the deeds, you're left to memories, and memories are words. So, now we deal with words. And one of the contemporary words we use and overuse so often is courage. We use the word courage. Well, let me tell you my friends, to too many in our contemporary society, courage has really been something that's weighed against the results of last night's poll, looking where the majority is at at any moment on any issue so you can have courage to get behind them.

Let's talk about you folks that are here today in the white hats and all of you in this state that should be wearing them, but we only ordered 5000 of them, and more of you came.

Let's talk about you folks and courage. As I said last night when I was interviewed on one of the television stations. Courage? I'll tell you what courage is. Think of one battle in a war of three and a half years that had a thousand battles. One battle is the battle of Okinawa near the end of the war. We had 36 American ships sunk. Nine thousand seven hundred of you, serving in the United States Navy, killed or wounded. Seven hundred and sixty-three American airplanes shot out of the sky. Forty thousand Marines and soldiers killed or wounded in one battle. Do you know how many that is? That's like killed or wounded, at one time, all the people in Spearfish, Madison, Sturgis, Brandon, Belle Fourche, Hot Springs, Milbank, Mobridge, Winner, and Canton. That's the same number that were killed and wounded in that one battle.

John Waldron from Fort Pierre, a true hero, died leading his squadron, his torpedo squadron, against the Japanese fleet at Midway, the first squadron that found the fleet as they were desperately searching for the Japanese and they were desperately searching for us. Those single-engine airplanes he and his torpedo squadron flew, loaded with heavy torpedo bombs and no fighter cover, discovered the Japanese fleet. They made a decision they would charge ahead and attack the fleet, knowing the Japanese fighters in the sky would blow them out of the sky. But every minute those fighters stayed in the air to shoot Waldron and his men down, they wasted their fuel and their ammunition. And they would have to land on their carriers and get refueled and more ammunition and when they did, the rest of the Yanks would be coming behind. So, into the face of death those people flew. Greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his country.

But let me tell you something, my friends. John Waldron wasn't any different than every single one of you. Every one of you that ever jumped out of an airplane in a parachute over enemy territory was a suicide attacker, just like John Waldron. Every one of you that ever hit the beach and waded onto shore, as they dropped the ramps from the PT boats, and charged through the surf, you were in the face of enemy machine gun and mortar and artillery and pill box and tank fire. You were suicide attackers just like John Waldron. Every single one of you that sailed your ships through torpedo laden seas, knowing full well you could blow up or sink to the bottom at any time, you were on suicide missions just like John Waldron. Every one of you that hit a beach at Tarawa or Bougainville or Guadalcanal or Okinawa or Iwo Jima, any of you that participated in the Battle of Leyte Gulf or the Solomons. Any of you that ever fought in the

Battles of Tunisia, North Africa, or hit the beach at Sicily or at Omaha or Sword or White Beach at Normandy, that crossed the Rhine, that fought hedgerow to hedgerow. I don't care where you fought. Every one of you that faced a bayonet or a bullet or a rifle or a gun or an airplane, you were on a suicide mission and never deterred yourself. You just decided that you were going to stand your ground, you were going to advance, you were going to do your duty. You wrote the book on courage, and we're going to learn it from you--every single one of us.

We talk about commitment. You know, for a lot of people, commitment is the flavor of the week. You want to know what commitment is to South Dakota? This state was number one in the percentage of its people that put on a uniform and went off to war in the Forties. We were first in the nation. When you think that 25 percent of you, 25 percent of you were Germanic in your origin. Twenty-five percent of this state is Germanic. And yes, 25 percent of you that put on that uniform, many of you went over to fight your grandfathers and your uncles and your cousins. Think of this. It's unbelievable. Think of it. It's unbelievable. But your country called you, and you had your commitment.

We're number one in the percentage of our people that served in the United States Navy, and we're number one in the percentage of our people that served in the United States Marine Corps, and we're number one in the fewest percentage of our people that were draft dodgers during the war. And we're number one in the percentage of our people that were underage veterans, joined the service when they were too young and went off to fight. That's what we have that you taught us, my friends, about commitment.

You know, to some people nowadays, the word duty is a dirty word. They don't like to be told we have duties. They think doing their own thing is just the most important of all Constitutional rights. Well, let me tell you what you veterans, you World War II folks, taught us about duty, the way you defined it. You defined it as people that, when the war started, were students with books. You were working in kitchens. You were cooks. You were waitresses. You were truck drivers, and you were farm kids and ranch kids. You were construction kids. You were the young people of South Dakota. Oh, you look old today, but I've seen your high school pictures. I've seen what you looked like. I've seen what the face of death brought to you and your generation. Like I said a few minutes ago, you taught us about duty, because when they told you to hit the beach, you hit the beach. And when they told you to fix bayonets and charge, you fixed your bayonets and charged. And when they told you to stand your ground, the line was drawn in the sand, it was drawn with your blood and your guts and with the lives of your friends, but you stood your ground. Yes, I can tell you something. You taught us a lot about duty.

Today, we have a lot of people that think honor is something a lot less important than getting caught at being dishonorable. None of you would have even know what I was talking about in the Forties. Over 7000 of you that went off to war for us were decorated for valor. Over 7000 of you, and yes, three of you were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, but that's because they can't give it to everybody.

Bianchi, a student at SDSU from New Ulm, Minnesota, single-handedly attacked Japanese bunker after bunker after his men were killed.

Bianchi, a prisoner of war, who spent his life, his last years, in a prisoner of war ship. They put them in the enemy ships because we were sinking so many of their ships they decided that the way to do this, the way to do this would be that when the Americans sank the enemy ships, they would be killing American soldiers.

As a man said when we dedicated Arlo Olson's memorial up at Toronto, he said, "The Captain just got really mad when they killed his squad, and single-handedly he took on the German Army."

Let me tell you my friends, let's talk about patriotism for just a moment. Patriotism--to most of us nowadays, patriotism means we'll celebrate Memorial Day if you'll keep it on Monday. God forbid that we

should use the day that was given to us for it. We want it to be convenient if we're going to remember things.

But, you know, in World War II, it was a total war. There were no bystanders in South Dakota anywhere. The school kids of this state went out and they gathered papers, and they gathered rags, and they gathered rubber. They were in the war effort up to their ears. They went out and gathered 14,000 bags of the floss from the milkweed pods for the lifejackets for the people at sea in 1944.

The school teachers helped run the rationing program, helped sell bonds.

The Red Cross, we only had 600,000 people left in this state during the war. The rest were gone fighting in the war, and 142,000 of you left here were in the American Red Cross, contributing over four million hours of work to the Red Cross.

The ladies in Aberdeen that spent week after week and month after month as what became known as the pheasant ladies--every troop train that came through Aberdeen, South Dakota, with the thousands and tens of thousands of soldiers going off to war, when they stopped to get provisions in Aberdeen, they always got their pheasant sandwiches from the pheasant ladies, around the clock.

The program the Dating Game you've seen on television, it was invented in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, at the Hollywood Theater where the young girls in the community used to date the people from the airbase in Sioux Falls.

This state was totally committed to the war. We sold more war bonds per capita in this state than any state in the Union. Let me give you a statistic that is unbelievable in today's world. Two out of every three dollars' worth of war bonds that were sold during the war to this day have still never been cashed. Why? Oh, our people weren't loaning the government money during the war. They were investing in their sons and daughters that were off fighting the war.

During the war, with all these men gone from South Dakota and many women, during the war, agriculture production in grain doubled from 1940 to 1945, and there were no new tractors being made during the war. Those old, decrepit things from the depression were used to double grain production during the war.

We almost doubled our livestock herds during the Second World War.

Oh, you taught us, all right, about patriotism. As General Killey said and we all know nowadays, freedom isn't free. Nobody gets it given to them. You earn it. And my friends, sitting out here today and listening to us and those all of you tens of thousands of you that are gone from us now, let me tell you. Let me tell you, I get to stand here today and say what I want to say. Why? Because I live in freedom, and I live in freedom because you paid the price. You paid it with years and years out of your life, and some of you paid it with your arms and your legs and your eyes and your ears and your minds. And others of you paid it with your sons and your brothers and your daughters, but you paid for it, and it's the job of my generation and those that follow me to continue making the payments. You see, this is something that you never get paid. It's not like a mortgage that someday you might be able to pay off. You pay for it your whole life.

Sacrifice, duty, patriotism, honor, commitment--you had it all. You had it all. My friends, as you look at this memorial today, let me tell you what you're going to see. You're going to see that every generation sets a standard for itself. America is always held to a higher standard than anybody else. We're held to the highest standards of all. People expect more from us than they expect from others. And while most of the other countries in the world look at their greatness in terms of their last victories, we in America have always measured our greatness in terms of our future. That's how we measure greatness. The true greatness of this country lies not in what has been accomplished by others, but it lies in terms of what we are capable of becoming. We all know, all of us here know, that America's greatest generation is yet to

come. It's every new generation. But I can tell all of you, each and every one of you that's here today-- each and every one of you that saw your friends killed and slaughtered, each and every one of you that answered your country's call, each and every one of you that fought hedgerow to hedgerow and ditch to ditch, that floated in a sea. I can tell you all, on behalf of all the people of South Dakota, not one of you ever went looking for greatness, but you all found it. You found it and you gave it to us as a legacy. And as long as God is our witness, as long as this nation stands, we will remember you, we will remember your service, and we will remember what it is our responsibility to do--to carry on your legacy.

God Bless every one of you, and God Bless America, and God Bless South Dakota.