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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
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Series: Speech File Draft Files
Subseries: Chron File, 1989-1993

OA/ID Number: 13488
Folder ID Number: 13488-012

Folder Title:
Memorial Day Ceremony, Nettuno, Italy, 5/28/89 [1]

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
G	26	15	7	4

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 05/19/89 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 10:00 a.m. Monday 05/22

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY, AMERICAN CEMETARY, NETTUNO, ITALY
(05/18 4:00 pm draft one)

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	STUDDERT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BREEDEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WINSTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PINKERTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY <i>not until noon (phone)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston (Rm. 122 x2930) by 10:00 a.m. on Monday 05/22, with an info copy to my office. Thanks.

RESPONSE:

James W. Cicconi
Assistant to the President
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
Ext. 2702

(McNally/Simon)

May 18, 1989

4:00 p.m.

Draft One

(B:NETTUNO)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY
AMERICAN CEMETARY
NETTUNO, ITALY
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 1989
10:00 A.M.

Mr. Prime Minister, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen:

We gather today to mark Memorial Day in America, to honor the thousands of young men and women, buried here and elsewhere, who put themselves in harm's way so that others might live in freedom.

As we gather, it is dawn in America. Memorial Day Weekend. The first days of summer. Soon screen doors will slam, parks will sound with the crack of the bat, children's voices will rise in the summer breeze pungent with the scent of barbeque smoke.

And the rites of summer are marked by American rituals. Today in Indianapolis the smell of coffee and sweat and kerosene will mingle in the heat rising off the sun-baked raceway. Off the docks of St. Louis the legacy of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer will be remembered with the annual riverboat race.

Memorial Day Weekend. By the time this ceremony concludes the first rays of sunlight will streak across the Potomac River, flashing first atop the monument to the founder of our Republic, then reaching down to touch the rows of silent white markers on the green Virginia hillside that is Arlington Cemetery. Soon the gathering light will reveal the lone figure of a man in uniform,

standing guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a 24 hour tradition that dates back more than fifty years.

And soon the sound of taps will rise in the wind all across America, heard by veterans, young and old, as they gather in cities and hamlets to salute the fallen, to slowly raise the flag to half-mast. Some will turn their thoughts here, to this peaceful hilltop above the shores of the Mediterranean, where 45 years ago the U.S. Third Infantry Division -- the most decorated in the war -- led the bloody advance on Rome.

On that Memorial Day Weekend -- 1944 -- I was not yet 20, standing aboard the San Jacinto on the other side of the world as she cruised from Wake Island toward Saipan. Like most Americans, the men aboard my ship had eagerly followed news of the Italian campaign.

During four long months of that year the combatants of World War II were locked near Nettuno in a deadly embrace. But before the week was out, the face of the world's greatest conflict would be changed, and the fate of the enemy sealed. On June 4th American troops liberated Rome, the streets lined by cheering Italians. By midnight General Mark Clark's Fifth Army stood on the banks of the Tiber, and the word went out to a waiting America: For the first time since the landings at Salerno in September 1943, the enemy was in full retreat.

It was the beginning of the end. And two days later a new front opened with D-Day, the invasion of France.

The fighting in the Italian campaign was as fierce and heroic as any seen in the war. The danger to each adversary was of such magnitude that the outcome of the war itself seemed to hang in that moment, on the courage, skill, and stamina of those who struggled near the water's edge. In this cemetery lies Sgt. Sylvester Antolak. An Ohio farmboy and the youngest son of Polish immigrants, 45 years ago this week he lost his life not far from where we stand -- and won the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Audie Murphy was among those who followed as Sgt. Antolak charged a machinegun nest near the Cisterna beachhead. Three times he was cut down by fire. Three times he got back up, tucking his gun under his shattered right arm. By the time he had disabled the gunners, ten enemy soldiers surrendered to this man whom their bullets could not stop.

Side by side under another set of crosses lie two of the three Kaspervik brothers of Quincy, Illinois. All three served in the Army Air Corps, all three died in action, these two killed ten days apart in 1944.

All told nearly 8,000 soldiers rest beneath the cedars of Nettuno cemetery, joined by another 3,000 missing whose names are etched in the white Carrara marble of the chapel. They come from every American state, from Texas to Maine, Alaska to Florida. Twelve are women, 109 are buried beneath Stars of David, 490 are unidentified -- known but to God. And the white crosses you see before you ring the world -- across the

battlefields of Europe and in the mountains of Asia, the deserts of north Africa, the jungles of Latin America -- silent testimony to America's battles for freedom in this century.

It was with the memory of the sacrifices of the American, British and French soldiers who fell during the Italian campaign -- and millions of other Europeans and Americans -- fresh in mind that NATO was created after the war.

As I reflect on this scene, and anticipate the dynamic and forward looking Europe of the 1990's, I think of generations of young people on both sides of the Atlantic who have grown up in peace and prosperity. With no experience of the horror and destruction of war, it may be difficult for them to understand why we need to keep a strong military deterrent to prevent war. The answer is here, among the silent graves.

(The cost of maintaining that deterrent is brought home to us all when tragedy strikes -- as it did last month on the USS Iowa. The loss of those fine sailors -- and the tears of their families and loved ones -- reminded us all of the risk and sacrifice in human terms that security sometimes demands. Let me add how impressed I was by the many expressions of sympathy I received from leaders around the world, and particularly by the eloquent words of Italy's distinguished President, Francesco Cossiga, as he shared the sorrow of our loss.)

As we gather, it is dawn in America. Memorial Day Weekend. And as the sun rises and the summer begins, the images at home are of a country that is prosperous and secure, a country

confident of its place in the world and aware of what that place will cost.

Soon that lone soldier at Arlington will resume his paces -- 21 steps in each direction, the changing of the guard precisely at the half hour. At Gettysburg the schoolchildren will scatter flowers on other unknown graves, blue and gray side by side, Americans.

In the kind of scene that will be repeated in small towns all across our nation, the American Legion in St. Clairsville, Ohio -- population 6,000 -- will dedicate a white granite monument in front of the courthouse to Sgt. Antolak, the Medal of Honor winner buried here. Two surviving brothers will attend. One of them, George, served in the South Pacific and was awarded the Purple Heart.

And as they do every year, the Legion in Quincy, Illinois -- just up the Mississippi from Hannibal -- will sponsor a parade down Main Street to honor fallen natives like the three Kaspervik brothers.

On Memorial Day, we give thanks for the blessings of freedom and peace and for the generations of Americans who have won them for us. We also pray for the same strength and moral resolve demonstrated by these veterans, as well as for the true and lasting peace found in a world where liberty and justice prevail.

And with that prayer, I will join Prime Minister _____ in placing a wreath to commemorate the sacrifice of those buried here at Nettuno.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 23, 1989

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: CHRISS WINSTON *CW*

FROM: EDWARD E. McNALLY *EMN*

SUBJECT: MEMORIAL DAY SPEECH AT THE AMERICAN CEMETERY,
NETTUNO, ITALY

I. SUMMARY

Attached for your consideration and review are draft remarks for your Memorial Day address, to be given on Memorial Day Sunday at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial in Nettuno, Italy.

II. DISCUSSION

At 10:00 a.m. (Italy time) on Sunday, May 28, 1989, you are scheduled to travel to the American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy, to lay a Memorial Day wreath -- commemorating all our veterans who have fallen in battle.

In part because the military campaign at nearby Anzio remains controversial, the suggested remarks are not particularly directed at the Italians, NATO, or even the armed services. Rather, the remarks were drafted as a Presidential Memorial Day message, directed at the heartland audience back home where families will be preparing to celebrate an American tradition.

Located just east of Anzio, about an hour's drive from Rome, the American Cemetery at Nettuno is one of fourteen sites in foreign countries that were selected after World War II as permanent American cemeteries. A grassy, tree-lined field of white crosses, the cemetery is somewhat reminiscent of Arlington National Cemetery. Nearly all of the almost 8,000 soldiers buried there are American, and nearly all fought in the 1943-44 liberation of Italy, from the invasion of Sicily to the fall of Rome. A small number also came from Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, Finland, Sweden and Spain.

(McNally/Simon)
May 23, 1989
5:00 p.m.
Draft Four
(B:NETTUNO)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY
AMERICAN CEMETERY
NETTUNO, ITALY
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 1989
10:00 A.M.

We gather today to mark Memorial Day in America, to honor the thousands of young men and women, buried here and elsewhere, who put themselves in harm's way so that others might live in freedom.

As we gather, it is dawn in America. Memorial Day Weekend. The first days of summer. Soon screen doors will slam, parks will sound with the crack of the bat, children's voices will rise in the summer breeze pungent with the scent of barbecue smoke.

And the rites of summer are marked by American traditions. As morning comes to Indianapolis the smells of coffee and gasoline will mingle in the heat rising off the sun-baked raceway. Further west, there'll be another race, as the blast of a ship's whistle sends the riverboats Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer steaming down the Mississippi off the docks of St. Louis.

Memorial Day Weekend. By the time today's ceremony concludes the first rays of sunlight will streak across the Potomac, flashing first atop the monument to the founder of our Republic, then reaching down to touch the silent rows of white markers on the green Virginia hillside that is Arlington

Cemetery. Soon the gathering light will reveal a lone figure -- a man in uniform -- standing guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers, a round the clock vigil unbroken in more than fifty years. Another moment and the dawn will flood the park that lays beneath the gaze of Lincoln, embracing the candles that flicker each night along the walls of the Vietnam Memorial.

And soon the plaintive sound of taps will rise in the wind in cities and hamlets all across America, heard by veterans of four wars, as they gather to salute the fallen. In town after town the ritual at sunrise will be the same, as first the flag is raised, then slowly lowered to half-mast.

The thoughts of some will turn eastward toward the sun -- across the ocean and across four decades -- to this grassy plain above the shores of the Mediterranean, where 45 years ago the U.S. Third Infantry Division -- among the most decorated in World War II -- led the bloody advance toward the liberation of Rome.

On that Memorial Day Weekend -- 1944 -- I was not yet 20, standing aboard the U.S.S. San Jacinto on the other side of the world as she cruised from Wake Island toward Saipan. Like Americans everywhere, the men aboard our ship had eagerly followed news of the Italian campaign.

During four long months of 1944, the combatants of World War II were locked near Nettuno in a deadly embrace. But before the week was out, the face of the world's greatest conflict would be changed, and the fate of the enemy sealed. On June 4th, American troops entered Rome, the streets lined by cheering Italians. By

midnight General Mark Clark's Fifth Army stood on the banks of the Tiber, and the word went out to a waiting America: For the first time since the landings at Salerno in September 1943, the enemy was in full retreat.

It was the beginning of the end. And two days later a new front opened with D-Day, the Normandy landing.

The fight to liberate Italy from the tyranny of fascism was as fierce and heroic as any seen in the war. The danger to each adversary was such that the outcome of the war itself seemed to hang at that moment on the valor and the vigor of each man who struggled near the water's edge.

One such soldier was Sgt. Sylvester Antolak, an Ohio farmboy and the youngest son of Polish immigrants. On a drizzly morning forty-five years ago this week, he led Staff Sgt. Audie Murphy and others in a bold charge through the rain and the ruin near Cisterna -- one man against a machinegun nest that blocked the road to Rome.

Three times he was cut down by fire. Three times he got back up, tucking his gun under his shattered right arm. By the time he had disabled the gunners, ten enemy soldiers surrendered to this man whom their bullets could not stop.

Sgt. Antolak fell near Cisterna that same day. He rests here beneath the cedars of Nettuno with nearly 8,000 soldiers, his grave one of two marked with the Congressional Medal of Honor. Joined by the names of another 3,000 missing etched in the white marble of the chapel, they come from every American

state, from Texas to Maine, Alaska to Florida. And these white crosses and Stars of David ring the world -- across the battlefields of Europe and the jungles of Asia, the deserts of north Africa, the hillsides of our homeland -- in silent tribute to America's battles for freedom in this century.

It was with the memory of the sacrifices of the American, British and French soldiers who fell during the campaign to liberate Italy -- and the sacrifices of millions of other Europeans and Americans in the cause of freedom -- fresh in mind that NATO was created after the war.

As I reflect on this scene, and anticipate the dynamic and forward-looking Europe of the 1990's, I think of generations of young people on both sides of the Atlantic who have grown up in peace and prosperity. With no experience of the horror and destruction of war, it may be difficult for them to understand why we need to keep a strong military deterrent to prevent war, and to preserve freedom and democracy. The answer is here, among the quiet of the graves.

The cost of maintaining freedom is brought home to us all when tragedy strikes -- as it did last month on the USS Iowa. The loss of those fine sailors -- and the tears of their families and loved ones -- reminded us all of the risk and sacrifice in human terms that security sometimes demands. Let me add how impressive were the many expressions of sympathy I received from leaders around the world, and particularly by the eloquent words

of Italy's distinguished President, Francesco Cossiga, as he shared the sorrow of our loss.

Sgt. Antolak also understood the cost of freedom. Today in his hometown of St. Clairesville, Ohio -- population 6,000 -- the townspeople will gather by the local courthouse to dedicate a white granite memorial to the county's Medal of Honor winners. George and Stanley Antolak will be there -- to remember their brother -- their hero, and ours.

It is the kind of scene that will be repeated today and tomorrow in parks and churchyards all across America.

A bit north of Mark Twain's Hannibal -- just up the Mississippi from that steamboat race I mentioned -- lies the town of Quincy, Illinois. When World War II came, Quincy offered up her sons in service. Three brothers -- Donald, Preston, and William Kaspervik -- joined the Army Air Corps. Their story is a common one -- and yet uncommon in the way of all those who answered the call to serve.

The first brother, Donald, was killed when two bombers collided on maneuvers in New Mexico, and their mother grieved. Preston, the second brother, died just south of here in Sicily, shortly after Patton's successful invasion. And their mother was overcome once again.

Ten days later, the third brother, William went down during a dangerous bombing mission over the mountains of central Italy. On the day of his death, his mother received a letter from him,

urging her not to worry. When the third telegram came, his mother could not bring herself to answer the door.

William and Preston Kaspervik are buried here side by side -- in soil they helped to free. Brothers in life, brothers in arms, brothers in eternity.

Their mother died 20 years ago. But back home in Quincy, the extraordinary sacrifice of this ordinary American family is still remembered. And today, as they do every year, the VFW and the American Legion will honor Quincy's fallen natives with a hometown parade down Main Street, high above the banks of the Mississippi.

As we gather today, it is dawn in America. Memorial Day Weekend. And as the sun rises and the summer begins, the images both here and at home are of countries that are prosperous and secure, countries confident of their place in the world and aware of the responsibility that comes with that place.

Soon that lone soldier at Arlington will resume his paces -- 21 steps in each direction, the changing of the guard precisely on the half hour. At Gettysburg, the schoolchildren will scatter flowers on other unknown graves, blue and gray side by side, Americans.

On Memorial Day, we give thanks for the blessings of freedom and peace and for the generations of Americans who have won them for us. We also pray for the same strength and moral resolve demonstrated by these veterans, as well as for the true and lasting peace found in a world where liberty and justice prevail.

And with that prayer, I ask that you join in your own silent prayers as we place a wreath to commemorate the sacrifice of those buried here at Nettuno -- and the sacrifice of all men and women who have given their lives for freedom.

#

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Rome, Italy)

For Immediate Release

May 28, 1989

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONYAmerican Cemetery
Nettuno, Italy

10:41 A.M. (L)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for honoring us today at this service. We gather today to mark Memorial Day in America, to honor the thousands of young men and women, buried here and elsewhere, who put themselves in harm's way so that others might live in freedom.

As we gather, it's dawn in America. Memorial Day Weekend. The first days of summer. And soon the screen doors will slam, parks are going to sound with the crack of the baseball bat, children's voices will rise in the summer breeze pungent with the scent of barbecue smoke.

And the rites of summer are marked by American tradition. As morning comes to Indianapolis the smells of coffee and gasoline will mingle in the heat rising off that sun-baked raceway. And further west, there's going to be another race, as the blast of a ship's whistle sends the riverboats Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer steaming down the Mississippi off the docks of St. Louis.

Memorial Day Weekend. By the time today's ceremony concludes the first rays of sunlight will streak across the Potomac, flashing first atop the monument to the founder of our Republic, then reaching down to touch the silent rows of white markers on the green Virginia hillside that is Arlington Cemetery. And soon the gathering light will reveal a lone figure -- a man in uniform -- standing guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a round-the-clock vigil unbroken in more than 50 years. Another moment and the dawn will flood the park that lays beneath the gaze of Lincoln, embracing the candles that flicker each night along the walls of the Vietnam Memorial.

And soon the plaintive sound of taps will rise in the wind in cities and hamlets all across America, heard by veterans of four wars as they gather to salute the fallen. In town after town, the ritual at sunrise will be the same, as first the flag is raised, then slowly lowered to half-mast.

The thoughts of some will turn eastward toward the sun -- across the ocean, across four decades -- to this grassy plain above the shores of the Mediterranean, where 45 years ago, the U.S. Third Infantry Division -- among the most decorated in World War II -- led the bloody advance toward the liberation of Rome.

And on that Memorial Day Weekend -- 1944 -- I wasn't yet 20 years old, flying torpedo bombers off the USS San Jacinto on the other side of the world as she headed from Wake Island to Saipan. But like Americans everywhere, the men aboard our ship had eagerly followed the news of the Italian campaign.

And during four long months of 1944, the combatants of World War II were locked near Nettuno in a deadly embrace. But before the week was out, the face of the world's greatest conflict would be changed and the fate of the enemy sealed. On June 4th, American troops entered Rome, the streets lined by cheering Italians.

MORE

And by midnight General Mark Clark's Fifth Army stood on the banks of the Tiber, and the word went out to a waiting America: For the first time since the landings at Salerno in September of 1943, the enemy was in full retreat.

It was the beginning of the end. And two days later a new front opened with D-Day, the Normandy landing.

The fight to liberate Italy was as fierce and heroic as any seen in the war. The dangers to each adversary -- the danger was such that the outcome of the war itself seemed to hang at that moment on the valor and the vigor of each man who struggled near the water's edge.

One such soldier was Sgt. Sylvester Antolak, an Ohio farmboy, the youngest son of Polish immigrants. On a drizzly morning some forty-five years ago this week, he led Staff Sgt. Audie Murphy and others in a bold charge through the rain and the ruin near Cisterna -- one man against a machine gun nest that blocked the road to Rome.

And three times he was cut down by fire. Three times he got back up, tucking his gun under his shattered arm. And by the time he disabled the gunners, ten enemy soldiers surrendered to this man whom their bullets could not stop.

Sgt. Antolak fell near Cisterna that same day. He rests here beneath the pines of Nettuno with nearly 8,000 soldiers, his grave one of two marked with our Congressional Medal of Honor. Joined by the names of another 3,000 missing etched in the white marble of the chapel, they come from every American state, from Texas to Maine, Alaska to Florida, New York to California. And these white crosses and Stars of David ring the world -- across the battlefields of Europe and the jungles of Asia, the deserts of North Africa, and the hillsides of our homeland -- in silent tribute to America's battles for freedom in this century.

It was with the memory of the sacrifices of the American, British and French soldiers who fell during the campaign to liberate Italy -- and the sacrifices of millions of other Europeans and Americans in the cause of freedom -- fresh in mind that NATO was created after the war.

As I reflect on this scene, and anticipate the dynamic and forward-looking Europe of the 1990s, I think of generations of young people on both sides of the Atlantic who have grown up in peace and prosperity. With no experience in the horror and destruction of war, it might be difficult for them to understand why we need to keep a strong military deterrent to prevent war, and to preserve freedom and democracy. The answer is here, among the quiet of the graves.

The cost of maintaining freedom is brought home to us all when tragedy strikes -- as it did last month aboard the USS Iowa. The loss of those fine sailors -- the tears of their families and the loved ones -- remind all of us of the risk and sacrifice in human terms that security sometimes demands. And let me add how impressive were the many expressions of sympathy that I received from leaders around the world, and particularly by the eloquent words of Italy's distinguished President, President Cossiga, as he shared the sorrow of our loss.

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The first brother, Donald, was killed when the two bombers collided on maneuvers in New Mexico, and their mother grieved. Preston, the second brother, died just south of here in Sicily, shortly after Patton's successful invasion. And their mother was overcome once again.

And 10 days later, the third brother, William, went down during a dangerous bombing mission over the mountains of central Italy. On the day of his death, his mother received a letter from him urging her not to worry. When the third telegram came, she couldn't bring herself to go to the door.

William and Preston Kaspervik are buried here in soil that they helped free. Brothers in life, brothers in arms, brothers in eternity.

Their mother died 20 years ago. But back home in Quincy, the extraordinary sacrifice of this ordinary American family is still remembered. And today, as they do every year, the VFW and the American Legion will honor Quincy's fallen natives with a hometown parade down Main Street, high above the banks of the Mississippi.

As we gather today, it is dawn in America, Memorial Day Weekend. And as the sun rises and the summer begins, the images both here and at home are of countries that are prosperous and secure, countries confident of their place in the world and aware of the responsibility that comes with that place.

Soon that lone soldier at Arlington will resume his paces -- 21 steps in each direction, the changing of the guard precisely on the half hour. And at Gettysburg, the schoolchildren will scatter flowers on other unknown graves, blue and gray, side by side, Americans.

On Memorial Day, we give thanks for the blessings of freedom and peace and for the generations of Americans who have won them for us. We also pray for the same strength and moral reserve demonstrated by these veterans, as well as for the true and lasting peace found in a world where liberty and justice prevail.

And with that prayer, I ask that you join in your own silent prayers as we place a wreath to commemorate the sacrifice of those buried here at Nettuno -- and the sacrifice of all men and women who have given their lives for freedom.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

10:53 A.M. (L)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 23, 1989

*one change
I like it!
CB*

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: CHRISS WINSTON *cw*

FROM: EDWARD E. McNALLY *EM*

SUBJECT: MEMORIAL DAY SPEECH AT THE AMERICAN CEMETERY,
NETTUNO, ITALY

I. SUMMARY

Attached for your consideration and review are draft remarks for your Memorial Day address, to be given on Memorial Day Sunday at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial in Nettuno, Italy.

II. DISCUSSION

At 10:00 a.m. (Italy time) on Sunday, May 28, 1989, you are scheduled to travel to the American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy, to lay a Memorial Day wreath -- commemorating all our veterans who have fallen in battle.

In part because the military campaign at nearby Anzio remains controversial, the suggested remarks are not particularly directed at the Italians, NATO, or even the armed services. Rather, the remarks were drafted as a Presidential Memorial Day message, directed at the heartland audience back home where families will be preparing to celebrate an American tradition.

Located just east of Anzio, about an hour's drive from Rome, the American Cemetery at Nettuno is one of fourteen sites in foreign countries that were selected after World War II as permanent American cemeteries. A grassy, tree-lined field of white crosses, the cemetery is somewhat reminiscent of Arlington National Cemetery. Nearly all of the almost 8,000 soldiers buried there are American, and nearly all fought in the 1943-44 liberation of Italy, from the invasion of Sicily to the fall of Rome. A small number also came from Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, Finland, Sweden and Spain.

(McNally/Simon)
May 23, 1989
5:00 p.m.
Draft Four
(B:NETTUNO)

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AMERICAN CEMETERY
NETTUNO, ITALY
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 1989
10:00 A.M.

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MR. PRESIDENT:
 Above deleted became
 fight from 1943 on was
 to liberate Italy from
 a Nazi occupation
 (Italy switched sides).

Jin

midnight General Mark Clark's Fifth Army stood
 the Tiber, and the word went out to a waiting America: For the
 first time since the landings at Salerno in September 1943, the
 enemy was in full retreat.

It was the beginning of the end. And two days later a new
 front opened with D-Day, the Normandy landing.

The fight to liberate Italy ~~from the tyranny of fascism~~ was
 as fierce and heroic as any seen in the war. The danger to each
 adversary was such that the outcome of the war itself seemed to
 hang at that moment on the valor and the vigor of each man who
 struggled near the water's edge.

One such soldier was Sgt. Sylvester Antolak, an Ohio
 farmboy and the youngest son of Polish immigrants. On a drizzly
 morning forty-five years ago this week, he led Staff Sgt. Audie
 Murphy and others in a bold charge through the rain and the ruin
 near Cisterna -- one man against a machinegun nest that blocked
 the road to Rome.

Three times he was cut down by fire. Three times he got
 back up, tucking his gun under his shattered right arm. By the
 time he had disabled the gunners, ten enemy soldiers surrendered
 to this man whom their bullets could not stop.

Sgt. Antolak fell near Cisterna that same day. He rests
 here beneath the cedars of Nettuno with nearly 8,000 soldiers,
 his grave one of two marked with the Congressional Medal of
 Honor. Joined by the names of another 3,000 missing etched in
 the white marble of the chapel, they come from every American

state, from Texas to Maine, Alaska to Florida. And these white crosses and Stars of David ring the world -- across the battlefields of Europe and the jungles of Asia, the deserts of north Africa, the hillsides of our homeland -- in silent tribute to America's battles for freedom in this century.

It was with the memory of the sacrifices of the American, British and French soldiers who fell during the campaign to liberate Italy -- and the sacrifices of millions of other Europeans and Americans in the cause of freedom -- fresh in mind that NATO was created after the war.

As I reflect on this scene, and anticipate the dynamic and forward-looking Europe of the 1990's, I think of generations of young people on both sides of the Atlantic who have grown up in peace and prosperity. With no experience of the horror and destruction of war, it may be difficult for them to understand why we need to keep a strong military deterrent to prevent war, and to preserve freedom and democracy. The answer is here, among the quiet of the graves.

The cost of maintaining freedom is brought home to us all when tragedy strikes -- as it did last month on the USS Iowa. The loss of those fine sailors -- and the tears of their families and loved ones -- reminded us all of the risk and sacrifice in human terms that security sometimes demands. Let me add how impressive were the many expressions of sympathy I received from leaders around the world, and particularly by the eloquent words

of Italy's distinguished President, Francesco Cossiga, as he shared the sorrow of our loss.

Sgt. Antolak also understood the cost of freedom. Today in his hometown of St. Clairesville, Ohio -- population 6,000 -- the townspeople will gather by the local courthouse to dedicate a white granite memorial to the county's Medal of Honor winners. George and Stanley Antolak will be there -- to remember their brother -- their hero, and ours.

It is the kind of scene that will be repeated today and tomorrow in parks and churchyards all across America.

A bit north of Mark Twain's Hannibal -- just up the Mississippi from that steamboat race I mentioned -- lies the town of Quincy, Illinois. When World War II came, Quincy offered up her sons in service. Three brothers -- Donald, Preston, and William Kaspervik -- joined the Army Air Corps. Their story is a common one -- and yet uncommon in the way of all those who answered the call to serve.

The first brother, Donald, was killed when two bombers collided on maneuvers in New Mexico, and their mother grieved. Preston, the second brother, died just south of here in Sicily, shortly after Patton's successful invasion. And their mother was overcome once again.

Ten days later, the third brother, William went down during a dangerous bombing mission over the mountains of central Italy. On the day of his death, his mother received a letter from him,

urging her not to worry. When the third telegram came, his mother could not bring herself to answer the door.

William and Preston Kaspervik are buried here side by side -- in soil they helped to free. Brothers in life, brothers in arms, brothers in eternity.

Their mother died 20 years ago. But back home in Quincy, the extraordinary sacrifice of this ordinary American family is still remembered. And today, as they do every year, the VFW and the American Legion will honor Quincy's fallen natives with a hometown parade down Main Street, high above the banks of the Mississippi.

As we gather today, it is dawn in America. Memorial Day Weekend. And as the sun rises and the summer begins, the images both here and at home are of countries that are prosperous and secure, countries confident of their place in the world and aware of the responsibility that comes with that place.

Soon that lone soldier at Arlington will resume his paces -- 21 steps in each direction, the changing of the guard precisely on the half hour. At Gettysburg, the schoolchildren will scatter flowers on other unknown graves, blue and gray side by side, Americans.

On Memorial Day, we give thanks for the blessings of freedom and peace and for the generations of Americans who have won them for us. We also pray for the same strength and moral resolve demonstrated by these veterans, as well as for the true and lasting peace found in a world where liberty and justice prevail.

And with that prayer, I ask that you join in your own silent prayers as we place a wreath to commemorate the sacrifice of those buried here at Nettuno -- and the sacrifice of all men and women who have given their lives for freedom.

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REMARKS: MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY
AMERICAN CEMETERY
NETTUNO, ITALY
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 1989
10:00 A.M.

FILE

WE GATHER TODAY TO MARK MEMORIAL DAY IN AMERICA, TO HONOR THE THOUSANDS OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN, BURIED HERE AND ELSEWHERE, WHO PUT THEMSELVES IN HARM'S WAY SO THAT OTHERS MIGHT LIVE IN FREEDOM.

- 2 -

AS WE GATHER, IT IS DAWN IN AMERICA. MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND. THE FIRST DAYS OF SUMMER. SOON SCREEN DOORS WILL SLAM, PARKS WILL SOUND WITH THE CRACK OF THE BAT, CHILDREN'S VOICES WILL RISE IN THE SUMMER BREEZE PUNGENT WITH THE SCENT OF BARBECUE SMOKE.

AND THE RITES OF SUMMER ARE MARKED BY AMERICAN TRADITIONS. AS MORNING COMES TO INDIANAPOLIS THE SMELLS OF COFFEE AND GASOLINE WILL MINGLE IN THE HEAT RISING OFF THE SUN-BAKED RACEWAY.

FURTHER WEST, THERE'LL BE ANOTHER RACE, AS THE BLAST OF A SHIP'S WHISTLE SENDS THE RIVERBOATS HUCK FINN AND TOM SAWYER STEAMING DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI OFF THE DOCKS OF ST. LOUIS.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND. BY THE TIME TODAY'S CEREMONY CONCLUDES THE FIRST RAYS OF SUNLIGHT WILL STREAK ACROSS THE POTOMAC, FLASHING FIRST ATOP THE MONUMENT TO THE FOUNDER OF OUR REPUBLIC, THEN REACHING DOWN TO TOUCH THE SILENT ROWS OF WHITE MARKERS ON THE GREEN VIRGINIA HILLSIDE THAT IS ARLINGTON CEMETERY.

SOON THE GATHERING LIGHT WILL REVEAL A LONE FIGURE -- A MAN IN UNIFORM -- STANDING GUARD AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIERS, A ROUND THE CLOCK VIGIL UNBROKEN IN MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS. ANOTHER MOMENT AND THE DAWN WILL FLOOD THE PARK THAT LAYS BENEATH THE GAZE OF LINCOLN, EMBRACING THE CANDLES THAT FLICKER EACH NIGHT ALONG THE WALLS OF THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL.

AND SOON THE PLAINTIVE SOUND OF TAPS WILL RISE IN THE WIND IN CITIES AND HAMLETS ALL ACROSS AMERICA, HEARD BY VETERANS OF FOUR WARS, AS THEY GATHER TO SALUTE THE FALLEN. IN TOWN AFTER TOWN THE RITUAL AT SUNRISE WILL BE THE SAME, AS FIRST THE FLAG IS RAISED, THEN SLOWLY LOWERED TO HALF-MAST.

THE THOUGHTS OF SOME WILL TURN EASTWARD TOWARD THE SUN -- ACROSS THE OCEAN AND ACROSS FOUR DECADES -- TO THIS GRASSY PLAIN ABOVE THE SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, WHERE 45 YEARS AGO THE U.S. THIRD INFANTRY DIVISION -- AMONG THE MOST DECORATED IN WORLD WAR II -- LED THE BLOODY ADVANCE TOWARD THE LIBERATION OF ROME.

ON THAT MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND -- 1944 -- I WAS NOT YET 20, FLYING TORPEDO BOMBERS OFF THE U.S.S. SAN JACINTO ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD AS SHE HEADED FROM WAKE ISLAND TOWARD SAIPAN. LIKE AMERICANS EVERYWHERE, THE MEN ABOARD OUR SHIP HAD EAGERLY FOLLOWED NEWS OF THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN.

DURING FOUR LONG MONTHS OF 1944, THE COMBATANTS OF WORLD WAR II WERE LOCKED NEAR NETTUNO IN A DEADLY EMBRACE.

BUT BEFORE THE WEEK WAS OUT, THE FACE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST CONFLICT WOULD BE CHANGED, AND THE FATE OF THE ENEMY SEALED. ON JUNE 4TH, AMERICAN TROOPS ENTERED ROME, THE STREETS LINED BY CHEERING ITALIANS. BY MIDNIGHT GENERAL MARK CLARK'S FIFTH ARMY STOOD ON THE BANKS OF THE TIBER, AND THE WORD WENT OUT TO A WAITING AMERICA: FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE LANDINGS AT SALERNO IN SEPTEMBER 1943, THE ENEMY WAS IN FULL RETREAT.

IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END. AND TWO DAYS LATER A NEW FRONT OPENED WITH D-DAY, THE NORMANDY LANDING.

THE FIGHT TO LIBERATE ITALY WAS AS FIERCE AND HEROIC AS ANY SEEN IN THE WAR. THE DANGER TO EACH ADVERSARY WAS SUCH THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE WAR ITSELF SEEMED TO HANG AT THAT MOMENT ON THE VALOR AND THE VIGOR OF EACH MAN WHO STRUGGLED NEAR THE WATER'S EDGE.

ONE SUCH SOLDIER WAS SGT. SYLVESTER ANTOLAK, AN OHIO FARMBOY AND THE YOUNGEST SON OF POLISH IMMIGRANTS. ON A DRIZZLY MORNING FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO THIS WEEK, HE LED STAFF SGT. AUDIE MURPHY AND OTHERS IN A BOLD CHARGE THROUGH THE RAIN AND THE RUIN NEAR CISTERNA -- ONE MAN AGAINST A MACHINEGUN NEST THAT BLOCKED THE ROAD TO ROME.

THREE TIMES HE WAS CUT DOWN BY FIRE. THREE TIMES HE GOT BACK UP, TUCKING HIS GUN UNDER HIS SHATTERED RIGHT ARM. BY THE TIME HE HAD DISABLED THE GUNNERS, TEN ENEMY SOLDIERS SURRENDERED TO THIS MAN WHOM THEIR BULLETS COULD NOT STOP.

SGT. ANTOLAK FELL NEAR CISTERNA THAT SAME DAY. HE RESTS HERE BENEATH THE CEDARS OF NETTUNO WITH NEARLY 8,000 SOLDIERS, HIS GRAVE ONE OF TWO MARKED WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR.

JOINED BY THE NAMES OF ANOTHER 3,000 MISSING ETCHED IN THE WHITE MARBLE OF THE CHAPEL, THEY COME FROM EVERY AMERICAN STATE, FROM TEXAS TO MAINE, ALASKA TO FLORIDA. AND THESE WHITE CROSSES AND STARS OF DAVID RING THE WORLD -- ACROSS THE BATTLEFIELDS OF EUROPE AND THE JUNGLES OF ASIA, THE DESERTS OF NORTH AFRICA, THE HILLSIDES OF OUR HOMELAND -- IN SILENT TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S BATTLES FOR FREEDOM IN THIS CENTURY.

IT WAS WITH THE MEMORY OF THE SACRIFICES OF THE AMERICAN, BRITISH AND FRENCH SOLDIERS WHO FELL DURING THE CAMPAIGN TO LIBERATE ITALY -- AND THE SACRIFICES OF MILLIONS OF OTHER EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM -- FRESH IN MIND THAT NATO WAS CREATED AFTER THE WAR.

AS I REFLECT ON THIS SCENE, AND ANTICIPATE THE DYNAMIC AND FORWARD-LOOKING EUROPE OF THE 1990'S, I THINK OF GENERATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC WHO HAVE GROWN UP IN PEACE AND PROSPERITY. WITH NO EXPERIENCE OF THE HORROR AND DESTRUCTION OF WAR, IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE NEED TO KEEP A STRONG MILITARY DETERRENT TO PREVENT WAR, AND TO PRESERVE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY. THE ANSWER IS HERE, AMONG THE QUIET OF THE GRAVES.

THE COST OF MAINTAINING FREEDOM IS BROUGHT HOME TO US ALL WHEN TRAGEDY STRIKES -- AS IT DID LAST MONTH ON THE USS IOWA. THE LOSS OF THOSE FINE SAILORS -- AND THE TEARS OF THEIR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES -- REMIND US ALL OF THE RISK AND SACRIFICE IN HUMAN TERMS THAT SECURITY SOMETIMES DEMANDS.

LET ME ADD HOW IMPRESSIVE WERE THE MANY EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY I RECEIVED FROM LEADERS AROUND THE WORLD, AND PARTICULARLY BY THE ELOQUENT WORDS OF ITALY'S DISTINGUISHED PRESIDENT, FRANCESCO COSSIGA, AS HE SHARED THE SORROW OF OUR LOSS.

SGT. ANTOLAK ALSO UNDERSTOOD THE COST OF FREEDOM. TODAY IN HIS HOMETOWN OF ST. CLAIRSVILLE, OHIO -- POPULATION 6,000 -- THE TOWNSPEOPLE WILL GATHER BY THE LOCAL COURTHOUSE TO DEDICATE A WHITE GRANITE MEMORIAL TO THE COUNTY'S MEDAL OF HONOR WINNERS. GEORGE AND STANLEY ANTOLAK WILL BE THERE -- TO REMEMBER THEIR BROTHER -- THEIR HERO, AND OURS.

IT IS THE KIND OF SCENE THAT WILL BE REPEATED TODAY AND TOMORROW IN PARKS AND CHURCHYARDS ALL ACROSS AMERICA.

A BIT NORTH OF MARK TWAIN'S HANNIBAL -- JUST UP THE MISSISSIPPI FROM THAT STEAMBOAT RACE I MENTIONED -- LIES THE TOWN OF QUINCY, ILLINOIS. WHEN WORLD WAR II CAME, QUINCY OFFERED UP HER SONS IN SERVICE. THREE BROTHERS -- DONALD, PRESTON, AND WILLIAM KASPERVIK -- JOINED THE ARMY AIR CORPS.

THEIR STORY IS A COMMON ONE -- AND YET UNCOMMON IN THE WAY OF ALL THOSE WHO ANSWERED THE CALL TO SERVE.

THE FIRST BROTHER, DONALD, WAS KILLED WHEN TWO BOMBERS COLLIDED ON MANEUVERS IN NEW MEXICO, AND THEIR MOTHER GRIEVED. PRESTON, THE SECOND BROTHER, DIED JUST SOUTH OF HERE IN SICILY, SHORTLY AFTER PATTON'S SUCCESSFUL INVASION. AND THEIR MOTHER WAS OVERCOME ONCE AGAIN.

TEN DAYS LATER, THE THIRD BROTHER, WILLIAM WENT DOWN DURING A DANGEROUS BOMBING MISSION OVER THE MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL ITALY. ON THE DAY OF HIS DEATH, HIS MOTHER RECEIVED A LETTER FROM HIM, URGING HER NOT TO WORRY. WHEN THE THIRD TELEGRAM CAME, HIS MOTHER COULD NOT BRING HERSELF TO ANSWER THE DOOR.

WILLIAM AND PRESTON KASPERVIK ARE BURIED HERE SIDE BY SIDE -- IN SOIL THEY HELPED TO FREE. BROTHERS IN LIFE, BROTHERS IN ARMS, BROTHERS IN ETERNITY.

THEIR MOTHER DIED 20 YEARS AGO. BUT BACK HOME IN QUINCY, THE EXTRAORDINARY SACRIFICE OF THIS ORDINARY AMERICAN FAMILY IS STILL REMEMBERED. AND TODAY, AS THEY DO EVERY YEAR, THE VFW AND THE AMERICAN LEGION WILL HONOR QUINCY'S FALLEN NATIVES WITH A HOMETOWN PARADE DOWN MAIN STREET, HIGH ABOVE THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

AS WE GATHER TODAY, IT IS DAWN IN AMERICA.
MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND. AND AS THE SUN RISES AND THE
SUMMER BEGINS, THE IMAGES BOTH HERE AND AT HOME ARE OF
COUNTRIES THAT ARE PROSPEROUS AND SECURE, COUNTRIES
CONFIDENT OF THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD AND AWARE OF THE
RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH THAT PLACE.

SOON THAT LONE SOLDIER AT ARLINGTON WILL RESUME HIS
PACES -- 21 STEPS IN EACH DIRECTION, THE CHANGING OF
THE GUARD PRECISELY ON THE HALF HOUR. AT GETTYSBURG,
THE SCHOOLCHILDREN WILL SCATTER FLOWERS ON OTHER
UNKNOWN GRAVES, BLUE AND GRAY SIDE BY SIDE, AMERICANS.

ON MEMORIAL DAY, WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE BLESSINGS OF FREEDOM AND PEACE AND FOR THE GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS WHO HAVE WON THEM FOR US. WE ALSO PRAY FOR THE SAME STRENGTH AND MORAL RESOLVE DEMONSTRATED BY THESE VETERANS, AS WELL AS FOR THE TRUE AND LASTING PEACE FOUND IN A WORLD WHERE LIBERTY AND JUSTICE PREVAIL.

AND WITH THAT PRAYER, I ASK THAT YOU JOIN IN YOUR OWN SILENT PRAYERS AS WE PLACE A WREATH TO COMMEMORATE THE SACRIFICE OF THOSE BURIED HERE AT NETTUNO -- AND THE SACRIFICE OF ALL MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES FOR FREEDOM.

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