

SGT. KYLE WHITE-HALL OF HEROES INDUCTION CEREMONY

Narrator:

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand for the arrival of the official party and remain standing for the singing of our National Anthem by Staff Sgt. Jesse Nice and the invocation, which will be delivered by Chaplain Donald L. Rutherford.

[Singing of the National Anthem]

Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Chaplain:

Let us pray.

Lord God, we indeed indebted to the memory of the Sky Soldiers that sacrificed greatly, some ultimately on the side of an Afghan mountain. Selfless and valiant, their example inspires our service today.

I pray that as we enshrine Sgt. Kyle White into our Hall of Heroes, that you would renew our will to pay any price, bear any burden, beat any hardship, support any friend, and oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.

Grant unto us a higher courage, a purer patriotism, and more determined will to serve our nation and our Army more faithfully.

This we pray in your holy name. Amen.

Narrator:

Please be seated. Ladies and gentlemen, the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Chief of Staff of the Army:

Good Morning everybody. It's my distinct privilege for me to be here today as we honor Sgt. Kyle White, who today joins a rare fraternity of military service members who have displayed extraordinary acts of valor during exceptional circumstances with great risk to their own personal safety.

Sgt. White embodies the essence of a Soldier and represents what every man and woman who dons this uniform strives to be ... an individual who has earned all the trust of all with whom he associates; one who possesses humility and selflessness that we all respect; one who embraces esprit de corps and routinely demonstrates a dedication to his profession that epitomizes the ethos of the American Soldier. In the face of imminent danger, he never quit. He always put his mission first. He never accepted defeat. Above all else, he never left his fallen comrades. Just as he was there for them that day, his bands of brothers are here for him today.

But we are also reminded today of the sacrifice that was made on Nov. 9, 2007, when six service members made the ultimate sacrifice, and their presence is felt in all of us as we honor Sgt. White. We remember:

Cpt. Matthew C. Ferrara, Sgt. Phillip A. Bocks, USMC, Sgt. Jeffery S. Mersman, Cpl. Lester G. Roque, Cpl. Sean K. Langevin, Spc. Joseph M. Lancour

We are honored to have some of their family members with us today. I would like to ask them to please stand and be recognized.

We also have with us today:

- Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work
- Under Secretary of the Army Brad Carson
- Sergeant Major of the Army Ray Chandler
- General John M. Paxton, Jr., Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps

Other distinguished guests from our Department of Defense and Army leadership that are joining us, Sergeant Major Battaglia, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman, and all other leaders here today, we're honored to have you here for this great ceremony.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to Sgt. White's family and friends: his father, Curt; his Mother, Cheryl; his grandfather, Bruce Funk; and his girlfriend Ms. Helen Ball. Thank you all for being here today.

I'd like to recognize Spc. Kain Schilling, who was there that day with Sgt. White. Kain, if you could please stand. I want to welcome all of Sgt. White's former unit members who are with us. Your presence reinforces the personal nature of combat and the strong bonds of friendship formed under extraordinary conditions. I'd like you all to please stand and be recognized as well. Thanks also to the current command teams from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, "Sky Soldiers," and from the 2-503rd Infantry Regiment for being here today.

When in combat, you never know what each day might bring. All you know is you must always be mentally and physically prepared. But as we all know there are certain days that are very different from others. That day for Sgt. White and his platoon was Nov. 9, 2007.

Sgt. White and Spc. Schilling were members of Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade. They were headquartered with members of their platoon and with soldiers of the Afghan National Army at Combat Outpost Bella. The night prior, 14

Americans—paratroopers from 2-503rd and one Marine, Sgt. Bocks—and a squad of Afghan National Army soldiers bunked in a schoolhouse in preparation for a Shura meeting with village elders at a nearby Mosque. Villagers delayed the meeting for several hours before beginning mid-afternoon, at around 13:30.

Not long after the meeting began, Sgt. Bocks let his leadership know that the interpreter was hearing radio chatter in a language he did not understand. This cued the platoon leader, then-Lt. Ferrara, to direct his element to return to the outpost.

During their Exfil, the unit was ambushed, coming under fire from a significant number of enemy positions.

Sgt. White along with his platoon immediately returned fire, emptying their magazine in the direction of enemy targets. He was knocked unconscious, suffering a concussion, when an enemy rocket-propelled grenade detonated near him. As he came to, a fragmented round sent shrapnel into his face. Even under such chaotic conditions, Sgt. White gathered himself and assessed the situation, noting that he, Spc. Schilling, Lt. Ferrara, Sgt. Bocks, and the interpreter were cut off from the rest of their patrol, whose members had been forced down a cliff. He saw that Spc. Schilling had been shot in the arm, so he quickly applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding, and then found concealment for them underneath a lone tree.

In the fury of the attack, Sgt. White took charge. After tending to Spc. Schilling, he noticed that Sgt. Bocks was badly injured and lying in the open.

Under continuous fire, Sgt. White sprinted back and forth four times to the Marine, diverting fire from him while moving him to a more protected location. Sgt. White then applied a tourniquet to Sgt. Bocks' leg but unfortunately, he succumbed to his wounds.

Returning to Spc. Schilling, Sgt. White saw that he had been hit again, this time in the leg. Sgt. White pulled off the belt from his own pants to form a tourniquet, tying it around Spc. Schilling's leg to stop the bleeding. Sgt. White next saw his platoon leader, Lt. Matthew Ferrara, lying still, face down. He again exposed himself to fire, crawling to Lt. Ferrara, who had perished from his wounds. Sgt. White then crawled back under fire to Spc. Schilling.

Sgt. White realized that he needed to communicate with friendly elements, but both his and Spc. Schilling's radios had been damaged, with Spc. Schilling's hand-mic getting blown out of Sgt. White's hand by an enemy round.

Once again, he subjected himself to hostile fire, this time to get Sgt. Bocks' radio. Sgt. White was then able to relay key information, enabling his company and battalion to bring in mortars, artillery, air strikes, and helicopter gun ships, which prevented the enemy from massing on friendly positions. Sgt. White also directed the interpreter to relay commands to the ANA, and he set them into a security perimeter.

The fight continued, with Sgt. White suffering another concussion as a friendly mortar round exploded near him. Reeling from multiple head injuries, he willed himself to stay awake, calling

in a MedEvac to evacuate both Spc. Schilling and injured ANA soldiers. Sgt. White marked the landing zone and assisted the medic in hoisting up the wounded Soldiers, refusing to be evacuated until all of the wounded were out of the ambush site.

Today as we induct Sgt. White into the famed Hall of Heroes, he joins the rare fraternity of military service members in the Medal of Honor Society.

All of them have demonstrated uncommon valor and extraordinary courage under fire. Sgt. White's humility, honor, leadership, integrity, personal courage, and selfless service represent what is best about our Soldiers and our Army.

Sgt. White's concern for his fellow Soldiers, his conspicuous gallantry, and his intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty make him a national hero with a lasting legacy. Today, we honor Sgt. White - a man of conviction and of courage. And by honoring him, we honor those heroes who fought so selflessly by his side, and all of our Soldiers who have raised their right hand to defend this country and defend our ideals. The bonds formed in combat between our brothers and sisters are everlasting and difficult to describe to someone else who has never experienced it. But it is the inspiration that drives ordinary Soldiers to be extraordinary. Today we recognize an extraordinary Soldier, Sgt. Kyle White.

The strength of our Nation is our Army
The strength of our Army is our Soldiers
The strength of our Soldiers is our Families
And that is what makes us Army Strong!

Thank you very much.

Narrator:

Ladies and gentlemen, the Under Secretary of the Army.

Under Secretary:

Families of the fallen. Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Work, the Army Chief of Staff Gen. Odierno, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense McCord, and other distinguished visitors. Gen. Paxton, the members of Chosen Company.

Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning.

We are here to induct Sgt. White into the Hall of Heroes. Now the word induction means the installation of someone into a position of responsibility, but it also means to introduce new ideas, new knowledge, new beliefs. And so we are here, as an institution, as an Army, as the Defense Department, perhaps to learn from Sgt. White and also from his predecessors, the Medal of Honor recipients past, whose names we also honor today, if only in silence.

So what do we learn from Sgt. White? One has only to look out into the audience to see the obvious answer as the Chief pointed out because of Sgt. White's decision to remain with the wounded, to never accept defeat, to never quit, to never leave a fallen comrade - Mr. Kain Schilling lives today.

But Sgt. White's fortitude under fire teaches us many other things, things more intangible perhaps that speak directly to our Army's institutional values. For in his life, in his heroic example, he teaches us what soldiers mean when they do raise that right hand and recite the creed.

For much of what soldiers profess - selfless service, honor, loyalty, duty; Sgt. White made manifest during the battle of nine November, enduring some of the most trying circumstances fate could see fit to contrive.

This is not to mention that he also, on that day, performed an exquisite exhibition of soldierly skills - stabilizing injured soldiers, reestablishing communication, and rising to the challenge of suddenly taking charge in a terrifying situation.

And while we know where Sgt. White's soldierly skills came from, we must ask the more interesting question- from where did Sgt. White learn these values and what brings our Soldiers, all of them, whether their names are inscribed in the Hall of Heroes or whether their names are instead largely forgotten to history, what brings them to perform so valiantly?

Since the six survivors of the Mitchell Raid were awarded the first Medals of Honor in 1863, citizens – from presidents to privates - have received the medal.

The stories of the medal's recipients come from every imaginable background, and from every station in life that this great land maintains. I think when I'm in the Hall of Heroes and I see that long list of names I think of Sergeant Desmond Doss, who, who was drafted in World War II, was drawn by religious conviction – he was a 7th Day Adventist - to petition as a conscientious objector, but he still wanted to serve nonetheless. As a medic, he exposed himself repeatedly to enemy fire in order to carry back the wounded over the Urasoe-Mura Escarpment of Okinawa. When he himself was wounded, he threw himself from the litter carrying him off the battlefield so that a soldier with still greater wounds might be removed from peril.

And I think of the story of another soldier, from World War I this time, whose battlefield prowess would result in the single handedly led to the surrender of an entrenched machine gun nest and the capture of 132 enemy soldiers. His name you, it was Sergeant Alvin York. With the history of Vernon Baker, an African American, who, trained in army camps during World War II in the stifling racism of the south, rose above all of that to earn the nation's highest honor - leading his men, outnumbered and outgunned, on the rugged hills of Italy.

Or perhaps another name on that wall of Sadao Munemori, a Japanese American, he was awarded the medal posthumously after diving onto a grenade to save the lives of his fellow Soldiers in the same series of actions as Vernon Baker was recognized for.

Sadao's parents received notice of his death while they were living in the same internment camp from which he had volunteered for duty in the United States Army.

So Why, why to use a phrase of Oliver Wendell Holmes, offered in remembrance of the Civil War heroes he had personally known, why were all of these hearts so "touched by fire?"

And where do we find such people?

Perhaps it is President Reagan who noted best in his radio address on Armed Forces Day in 1982, when asked that very question, he replied "We find them where we've always found them. They are the product of the freest society man has ever known. They make a commitment to the military—make it freely, because the birthright we share as Americans is worth defending."

I believe that President Reagan is correct, but I also believe that we can look a bit more close to home for some of Sgt. White's values and the sources of his character.

In the audience we have Sgt. White's father, Mr. Curt White, who perhaps taught him a little of that humility that Sgt. White is already so famous for.

Mr. White, if you could please stand, we talked a little bit earlier and eight years United States Army from 1972-1980 and 31 years at the Boeing corporation. Please join me in congratulating him. Thank you. Like all the veterans from that conflict we owe him an inestimable debt.

And Mrs. White, Cheryl White, Sgt. White's mother, if you might stand as well and be recognized.

[addressing Ms. White] You know it is a truism, a bromide, that "[one's] character shapes [one's] fate." That is no doubt quite right, that character shapes fate, but I would say one's mother shapes one's character. Please give a round of applause.

Curt and Cheryl thank you – and a job well done.

I do wish to convey gratitude, not just to you and your son, but to all the soldiers of Chosen Company – for the service and sacrifice of all of them.

Your work, their work inspires us, and for those of Chosen Company who have made the ultimate sacrifice – the names that the chief has already read, but worth repeating again: Cpt. Ferrara, Sgt. Mersman, Cpl. Roque, Cpl. Langevin, Spc. Lancour, and from the Marine Corps, Sgt. Bocks.

President Lincoln's words serve best - There is little that we can do to commemorate their sacrifice. "...[rather] it is for us the living to be dedicated here to the unfinished work" that lies ahead. And the work of the Army continues – to empower our soldiers abroad, to care for, with dignity, those soldiers wounded, to honor our obligations to soldiers whose service is now honorably completed, to remember those soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice, and to ready future soldiers for when the nation calls again – for the nation will call again.

Shaped by our nation's values, and forged by the values of the Army so present today – we will be ready.

May God bless you, may God bless Sgt. White and his family, and may God bless all of those who choose a life of service to this country, and who, in the poet's words, have left the vivid air signed with their honor.

Thank you.

Narrator:

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Deputy Secretary of Defense:

To the family and friends, acquaintances and comrades in arms of Sgt. Kyle White. Good Morning on this absolutely splendid day in May.

It is singularly an honor for me to represent Secretary Hagel, who is a former Army sergeant. He would be right here if he was in the country, but he is out of the country today and has asked me to represent him. I do so with great honor. Joining the Chief, Under Secretary Carson, Sgt. Maj. Chandler, Gen. Paxton, veterans and current members of our Armed Forces, the Soldiers of Chosen Company, and all those who know Sgt. White. We gather here today to honor his extraordinary heroism.

Now, quite frankly there's little more that I can add to the stirring account that General Odierno gave of the battle of 09 November 2007 and the selfless and heroic actions that Sergeant White performed that day for which he was awarded our nation's highest award for bravery -- the Medal of Honor. Nor can I improve on the heartfelt explanation of Under Secretary Carson who explained how Sgt. White embodies the very best of what makes all Soldiers, as well as Marines, Sailors, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen so singularly special and part of the greatest Armed Forces that this world has ever seen.

So as I prepared for this speech, I asked myself, what I might add to this gathering and I decided to pull on a little bit of the string that both the chief and the under secretary talked about.

The unbelievably small and extraordinary brotherhood that Sgt. White has entered and what it means to all of us who have served the nation.

Secretary Carson mentioned the first Medal of Honor was awarded in 1863 in the midst of one of the greatest catastrophes our nation has ever had -- our Civil War. And perhaps, fittingly for the audience today, it was awarded to another soldier the first one, Pvt. Jacob Parrott, Company K, 33rd Ohio Infantry, one of six survivors of the daring raid that the under secretary talked about, sent 200 miles behind enemy lines to disrupt Confederate railroad traffic.

Since then, 40 million Americans -- men and women -- have either volunteered or been drafted

to serve in times of war spanning from 1863 and the remainder of that bloody Civil War to the Spanish American Wars to WWI, WWII, Vietnam, the first Persian Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan and countless small, bloody wars and battles around the globe.

Of those 40 million servicemen and women, only 3,488 -- counting Sergeant White -- have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Now I want you to think about that for just one second. Since 1863, we have awarded this medal less than 3,500 times reserved for a very, very select few who have responded above and beyond the call of duty as outlined so eloquently by Gen. Odierno and risk their lives in selfless acts of bravery. In all of WWII, only 464 medals were awarded. Korea 133. In Vietnam 246. Of the 2.5 million service members who've deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq since the terrible attacks of September 11, 2001. Sgt. White is the 14th recipient of this honor. That is why, by custom, every service member, regardless of rank, regardless of station, stands and salutes anyone who wears the pale blue medal adorned with stars around their neck. It is also why we consider the Hall of Heroes such a hallowed and storied place because it represents the highest Soldierly virtues of literally millions of men and women who have risked their own lives and often given them for their country and their brothers and sisters in arms in battle.

Sgt. Kyle as the President of the United States said yesterday and recounted by Gen. Odierno today, your inspiring actions in that narrow pass in Afghanistan, in that cold day in November have proven yourself worthy to be a member of this select group.

Secretary Hagel and I and everyone in the Department regardless if they're a Soldier couldn't be prouder for you or your unit and your Army. So this is a little unscripted, but I ask Sgt. White for you to stand and face the crowd and I'd ask that everyone who has served in uniform, and is either in uniform or not, to stand with me and salute this American hero today.

Hand salute. Ready to.

And finally they've been recognized here today several times and I think by his very actions that day in November as well as the metal bracelet that Sgt. White wears around his wrist every day.

I think that I could confidently speak for him and ask that we all pause once more again and offer a moment of silence or prayers for the comrades Sgt. White lost on that fateful day on 9 November. Capt. Ferrara United States Army, Sgt. Mersman United States Army, Cpl. Langevin United States Army, Cpl. Rouque United States Army, Sgt. Lancour United States Army, and Sgt. Bocks United States Marine Corps.

Sergeant White, these fine young men, your fellow warriors -- your brothers-in-arms -- although no longer of this Earth, are going to be with you forever. I'm sure they're toasting you now, applauding your life that you've lived since their deaths and cheering your future accomplishments. After all, the very purpose of this award is to celebrate in both gratitude and remembrance. So Kyle, let this award mark not only your bravery, but the bravery and memory of your fallen brothers in arms.

I hope that all Americans come to know your service [and] to know the exceptional courage you

displayed on behalf of your fellow soldiers and Marines and to witness the example you've set as one who answered the call to service, completed your mission, transition to civilian life with grace, purpose and honor. Your story represents the very, very best of the American fighting men and women and preserves the memory of your comrades. May your medal remind you of the tremendous good your service has brought this far and of the limitless things Secretary Hagel and I know will bring in the future.

On behalf of Secretary Hagel, thank you, Kyle. May God bless you and your family, and all those like you in the greatest Army on the planet, who volunteered to serve and fight our nation's foes wherever they may be found.

Thank you all and God bless you.

Narrator:

Gen. Odierno, Under Secretary Carson, Sgt. Maj. Of the Army Chandler and Sgt. White will now join Secretary Work on the stage for the Induction ceremony.

The President of the United States of America authorized by act of Congress has awarded in the name of Congress, the Medal of Honor.

Spc. Kyle J. White distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a radio telephone operator with Company C, 2nd Battalion Airborne, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade during combat operations against an armed enemy in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan on November 9, 2007.

On that day, Spc. White and his comrades were returning to Bella Outpost from a shura with Aranas village elders. As the Soldiers traversed a narrow path surrounded by mountainous, rocky terrain, they were ambushed by enemy forces from elevated positions. Pinned against a steep mountain face, Spc. White and his fellow Soldiers were completely exposed to enemy fire. Spc. White returned fire and was briefly knocked unconscious when a rocket-propelled grenade impacted near him.

When he regained consciousness, another round impacted near him, embedding small pieces of shrapnel in his face. Shaking off his wounds, Spc. White noticed one of his comrades lying wounded nearby. Without hesitation, Spc. White exposed himself to enemy fire in order to reach the soldier and provide medical aid.

After applying a tourniquet, Spc. White moved to an injured Marine, providing aid and comfort until the Marine succumbed to his wounds. Spc. White then returned to the soldier and discovered that he had been wounded again. Applying his own belt as an additional tourniquet, Spc. White was able to stem the flow of blood and save the soldier's life.

Noticing that his and the other Soldiers' radios were inoperative, Spc. White exposed himself to enemy fire yet again in order to secure a radio from a deceased comrade. He then provided

information and updates to friendly forces, allowing precision airstrikes to stifle the enemy's attack and ultimately permitting medical evacuation aircraft to rescue him, his fellow Soldiers, Marines, and Afghan army soldiers.

Spc. Kyle J. White. Extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company C, 2nd Battalion Airborne, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, and the United States Army.

The War on Terrorism plaque will now be unveiled inducting Sgt. White into the Hall of Heroes.

At this time, the Deputy Secretary of Defense will present the Medal of Honor flag. On 23 October 2002, Public Law 107-248, section 8143 established the Medal of Honor flag to recognize servicemembers who have distinguished themselves by gallantry in action above and beyond the call of duty.

The Medal of Honor flag commemorates the sacrifice and bloodshed for our freedoms and gives emphasis to the Medal of Honor being the highest award for valor by an individual serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. The light blue color with gold fringe bearing 13 stars are adapted from the Medal of Honor ribbon.

Thank you Deputy Secretary Work, Gen. Odierno, Under Secretary Carson, and Sgt. Maj. Chandler. Ladies and Gentlemen, Sgt. Kyle White.

Kyle White:

Deputy Secretary Work, Gen. Odierno, Under Secretary Carson, Sgt. Maj. Of the Army Chandler, generals and flag officers, brothers and sisters in arms, Gold Star families, my family, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

I've had nightmares before, but never have I had two at the same time and I'm living both of them right now. One, is having the entire senior leadership watching every single thing I do and the second one is speaking in front of a large group of people.

No offense, it's just, last time I saw this much stuff, I was usually in trouble for something.

I do have nightmares about my 09 November though. Fewer and fewer as the days go on, but sometimes I can be right back there smelling the gunpowder and burning hot metal of enemy grenades, tasting the air after my radio was hit. I can close my eyes and feel the whiz of the bullets as they pierce through my uniform, missing my skin but annoying the hell out of me, like mosquitoes at a barbecue. As I tried to get Sgt. Bocks out of danger, I can still see the puff of air jostle Kain Schilling's uniform pant leg before the pool of blood began to soak through it from the enemy round.

It was the worst day of my life.

That day, those smells, those sites changed my life, but at least I have a life. I was given a gift on 09 November, the gift that six of my brothers did not get, I get to go on. I get to be better than I was at the age of twenty, just a knuckleheaded boy from Seattle who wanted to jump out of airplanes.

In my eyes, those six men whose names I want everyone in the world to know, they can never be any more perfect than they were that day

On that goat trail on a mountainside in Afghanistan, fighting for their brothers. They were warriors. They were the best of us. I knew some better than others. My one regret is I didn't take enough opportunities to get to know them all.

In fact, I barely knew Sgt. Jeffery Mersman who served four tours in Iraq before his final deployment as my teammate. I have since learned he loved to hunt and go mudding.

And I only met Marine Sgt. Philip Bocks five days before the ambush. He was an expert in teaching others how to survive in mountainous terrain. He was a professional, tough, though he knew he was dying, he never once gave an error of fear. He was amazing.

I remember before deployment back in Italy. I would go to Lancour's barracks room to hang out, his roommate side, one side was all squared away, everything was the way it was supposed to be. On the other side, it would like a bomb went off. Back in his hometown, when our unit was attacked at ranch house, few months before 09 November ambush. He cared about it so much that it was all he can think about. While he was at home safe, it was getting back to us was what he wanted. He wanted to be there to protect us, no matter what.

Cpl. Lester Roque was the most amazing medic. He was a quiet professional. I remember...one of the things I remember most about him was that he always had these noodle bowls that his family would send over and I would just hound him on the daily for one of those because they were delicious.

Capt. Matthew Ferrara, I was his RTO so we were pretty close. He was always very by the books officer, but every once in a while he break protocol and just be one of the boys, like the time when he "acquired" a projector from supply and a sheet as well, and he hung it on the wall so we could have a massive Xbox tournament. That was probably the best few days of the deployment and sure others didn't feel the same as he tended to cheat and beat us all, but that's okay, but it was funny because we were real Soldiers fighting in a war. But we were more into a vido game about war.

And I save the best for last, my friend, Sean Langevin. People were just drawn to him.

He was just so funny and so mischievous. I knew full well that hanging around with him would land me in some kind of trouble, but I didn't care, I just wanted to be around him. He brought fun wherever he went.

It was one day on guard shift not too long before 09 November that we got to talking about what-if? We both promised to take care of each other's families if something happen. It wasn't too long after that random discussion that my promise was tested.

These six men were sky soldiers who gave their all to protect each other. They were a special few of America's young men who braved death and danger in search of something greater than themselves as part of the nation's military. They are part of the nine eleven generation 9/11, the data change lives of a daresay everyone in this room, so to say the six would give their lives in a different 9/11, nine November.

They were just boys when this very building was rocked by flight 77, when the twin towers came crashing down in the city I will visit next week. They were teenagers with acne and girl problems when the country was torn by terrorism on that terrible day. November, 9/11. but these boys from places like Troy, Michigan, Walnut Creek, California broke quickly and volunteered to devote their lives to help prevent that nightmare from ever occurring on this soil again. We owe young men like them so much gratitude. They knowingly left their future to chance indifference to a greater calling while my name hangs in the Hall of Heroes. The names of the six men will hang in my heart and of course on my wrist forever: Bocks, Lancour, Ferrara, Langevin, Mersman, and Roque. Members of the 9/11 to generation lost on 09-11-2007, but never forgotten. They gave so others can live. What better honor could I pay them, but to live each day to the fullest and be the best that I can be.

Everything I do is done to make them proud. Everything I am, because they are no longer here. Their losses taught me how to start to allow for no regret, seize the moments that are given and be better than you were the day before. I know that's what they would do. I hope beyond hope that I can one day be worthy of their sacrifice; these are my brothers and they are more than soldiers for life, they are Sky Soldiers for life. Let us not forget that these are six of 2,221 service members who died serving as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, the war instigated by attacks on 9/11 2001. My name is just one of 3,488 names etched in the Hall of Heroes, the story of Chosen company is just one of the countless stories of bravery and sacrifice that happened and are still happening in service of our nation. This is just one story. There are others, I urge you each to learn the names that match these numbers so their second sacrifices can never be forgotten. Thank you for sharing this special day with my family, my team members and myself.

Narrator:

Thank you Sgt. White.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please remain standing and join in the singing for the Army Song.

March along, sing our song, with the Army of the free.

Count the brave, count the true, who have fought to victory.
We're the Army and proud of our name!
We're the Army and proudly proclaim:

First Chorus:

First to fight for the right,
And to build the Nation's might,
And the Army goes rolling along.
Proud of all we have done,
Fighting till the battle's won,
And the Army goes rolling along.

Refrain:

Then it's hi! hi! hey!
The Army's on its way.
Count off the cadence loud and strong;
For where'er we go,
You will always know
That the Army goes rolling along.