

Harry S. Truman (1884-1972)

Address Broadcast to the Armed Forces

given on April 17, 1945

To the Armed Forces of the United States throughout the world:

After the tragic news of the death of our late Commander in Chief, it was my duty to speak promptly to the Congress, and the Armed Forces of the United States.

Yesterday, I addressed the Congress. Now I speak to you.

- 5 I am especially anxious to talk to you, for I know that all of you felt a tremendous shock, as we did at home, when our Commander in Chief fell.

All of us have lost a great leader, a far-sighted statesman and a real friend of democracy. We have lost a hard-hitting chief and an old friend of the services.

Our hearts are heavy. However, the cause which claimed Roosevelt, also claims us. He never faltered--nor will we!

- 10 I have done, as you would do in the field when the Commander falls. My duties and responsibilities are clear. I have assumed them. These duties will be carried on in keeping with our American tradition.

As a veteran of the first World War, I have seen death on the battlefield. When I fought in France with the 35th Division, I saw good officers and men fall, and be replaced.

- 15 I know that this is also true of the officers and men of the other services, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and the Merchant Marine.

I know the strain, the mud, the misery, the utter weariness of the soldier in the field. And I know too his courage, his stamina, his faith in his comrades, his country, and himself.

We are depending upon each and every one of you.

Yesterday I said to the Congress and I repeat it now:

- 20 "Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices. Because of these sacrifices, the dawn of justice and freedom throughout the world slowly casts its gleam across the horizon."

At this decisive hour in history, it is very difficult to express my feeling. Words will not convey what is in my heart.

- 25 Yet, I recall the words of Lincoln, a man who had enough eloquence to speak for all America. To indicate my sentiments, and to describe my hope for the future, may I quote the immortal words of that great Commander in Chief:

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up our nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

(477 words)

Quelle: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=12216&st=&st1=>

Aufgaben

1. What duty was he fulfilling when he gave this speech?
2. What was the purpose of his speech?
3. How did President Truman personalize his comments?
4. Read carefully the text of the quote he used from Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address delivered March 4, 1865. Why do you think President Truman used these words to close his speech to the men and women of the Armed Forces?