

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration

July 4, 2026

The President. Good evening, America. If you think that was easy, it wasn't. And I want to thank everybody, because they did the right thing. They saw lightning, and I said: "There's no way. If we have to speak in front of one person at four o'clock in the morning, I'm going to be here." There's no way we can be deterred.

And they estimated they had 375,000 people before everybody had to leave, and they now have 150,000 people. It's the craziest thing anyone's ever seen. At least.

And I want to just thank you. And I feel so badly about some people; they left, and they couldn't get back. But you're very special people, and we have a very special country.

Thank you very much.

Tonight we come together for one of the most joyous and glorious milestones of all time, the two—and you know what that is: two-five-oh—the 250th anniversary.

And I do have to say this: One of my very brilliant people backstage said: "Don't worry about it, sir. We can do it maybe next week." I said, "It doesn't work next week." This is the big day. We want July 4. We're not looking for July something else—because this is the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Nothing like it.

For two and a half centuries, our American republic has stood as the crowning achievement of human history. This country is the home of freedom. This is the land of liberty. And this is a flag that's the banner of the most extraordinary, most exceptional, most incredible nation ever to exist on the face of the Earth, and we're doing better now than we've ever done before.

No people have done more good, shown more courage, made more progress, righted more injustice, or achieved more greatness than you, the American people.

For 250 years, the United States of America has been the hope, the promise, the light, and the glory among all of the nations of the world. All over the world, they try and be like us. Nobody can be like us. And with God's help, we will always be this or even better. We're going to be better.

Here on our National Mall, we're celebrating freedom's triumph over tyranny, liberty's conquest over oppression, and the enduring victory of the American spirit from the July 4, 1776, to July 4, 2026. Big dates. That's big dates. Two big ones.

And tonight, our country is stronger, freer, richer, safer, and prouder than ever before. But it all started with the miracle of history that lives forever in the heart of every single patriot. In Philadelphia, our Founding Fathers summoned the courage of giants and the wisdom of centuries to boldly proclaim these timeless truths. They declared that all men are created equal—that they are endowed with sacred, unalienable rights by the hand of our Creator—and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In signing their names to the roster of freedom, those 56 patriots put everything at risk, stepped onto the stage of destiny, and seized a victory for the ages. And that's what it was, and this is an evening for the ages, I believe. This is something very special.

This is bigger than—if we didn't have the lightning blaring—we had lightning blaring, but this is bigger. Little more inconvenient, but it's bigger. I think, in its own way, it's more beautiful.

From the beginning, we were a nation that lived by the motto "Victory or Death" and "Live Free or Die." One out of every 100 Americans gave their lives in the fight for independence. To remind us of who these heroes were and what they gave us, we are honored to have here tonight, in the heart of our Nation's Capital, one of the very first American flags ever to exist.

Dating back to 1777, it bears the 13 stars and 13 stripes of the 13 States that declared independence on the Fourth of July. There it is. This was the flag that flew victorious at Saratoga. And these are the real deals too. These are the real flags. These are flags that have seen a lot.

These were the stars and stripes that flew triumphant when the British waved the white flag of surrender at Yorktown. That was a big surrender. Nobody thought that was possible. They were the greatest power of the world, and they surrendered, and that was the beginning.

Ever since, the entire world has been on notice that Americans will never let anyone take our freedom away. Won't happen. And all these talks from the Communists—they haven't got a chance. Not even a chance. We don't want Communists in our country.

Never worked, and it never will work. *[Laughter]*

Americans must never forget that we are a historic and heroic people with a heroic spirit and a heroic purpose on this beautiful Earth of ours.

We are made of the courage and the fire and the flesh and the blood of the best and the bravest people this world has ever produced. We are the bravest and the best.

Tonight we pledge allegiance to the flag they gave us, and we say God bless the immortal patriots of 1776 and long live the cause of independence. May it reign forever and ever and ever.

We will always be on top. We will never let our country fall. We will always be the best.

Our founders not only won our liberty; they secured it with the most righteous political document ever conceived. It's called the Constitution of the United States. Very special. And it's because of their genius that we remain the finest people on the planet after 250 years.

Unlike so many others in the world, in this country, we have freedom of speech, freedom of religion, equal justice under the law—although, I wasn't treated that well, but we won't get into that—*[laughter]*—and the right to keep and bear arms.

And for the almost 6 years that I was President, I guarded very, very powerfully your Second Amendment, and they didn't do a thing to it. And it was not easy, but we guard your Second Amendment. We guard it very, very strongly and cautiously.

Across the generations, Americans have fought, bled, and died not just to secure those rights, but to expand them to citizens of every race, religion, color, and creed, because we are one people, we are one family—you showed that tonight—with one flag. And as our Declaration of Independence tells us, we are all made in the image of one almighty God.

And a Communist will never say that, that's for sure.

Few heroes remind us of these truths more than William Carney, who escaped slavery to become a Union soldier in the Civil War, which was a very big, big deal at the time.

On the front lines of battle, he saw a comrade struck down by enemy fire while carrying the Stars and Stripes, and Sergeant Carney dove to the ground to keep the flag from touching the mud. He didn't want to have it touch the ground. He didn't want to have it touch the mud. He wanted it to be perfect.

He raised it high above the field and was shot four times. They thought he was gone, but he kept moving forward—he loved our country; he loved our flag—before he returned to camp and announced, "Boys, the old flag never touched the ground."

And he became the first African American to receive the congressional Medal of Honor—he got the congressional Medal of Honor. And he was the first African American, and he was some man. They've written stories about him. He was something special.

With us tonight to celebrate this forward march of freedom is another Medal of Honor recipient, Colonel Paris Davis, whose courage won eternal glory in Vietnam.

He helped lead a surprise attack on 100 enemy combatants. They said he was finished, his whole group was finished, and despite multiple life-threatening wounds, saved the lives of his fellow soldiers.

And this evening, he stands to salute the only flag of its kind, the one that was draped over the casket of President Abraham Lincoln in Independence Hall.

Thank you very much. Great.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. He looks better than I do. He looks great. And he's brave.

Because of heroes like these, our flag will always be a symbol of liberty and justice for all.

Colonel Davis, thank you very much. Great man. Great man. Thank you.

Americans expanded the blessings of freedom, and we have never stopped expanding our ambitions and our dreams.

We had the American dream. We never had the American dream, however, like we have it right now. The American dream is back—very strong, beautiful.

You know, to get into our military now is tough. Two years ago, we couldn't fill a job, and now it's overflowing. We have so many. Setting records. We're setting records. It's actually hard to get in.

That includes our great police forces and our firemen. They couldn't hire anybody. Nobody wanted to do it. Now it's hard to get those positions, but it's really hard to get into our military because people respect and love our country again.

Our rise to being the world's strongest and most powerful nation was no accident of history.

We rebuilt our military in my first term. We used it a little bit in our—[laughter]—actually, I should say third term, but I won't do that because I don't want any controversy. [Laughter] But we use it, and we've had tremendous success.

You look at Venezuela. You look at Iran. We wiped it out, wiped out their military.

Americans crossed the Great Plains, scaled the Rockies, tamed—they really just tamed the wilderness, and conquered the frontier and built the Empire—it's called the "Empire of Liberty."

We laid down the railroads, raised up the skyscrapers—those beautiful skyscrapers—and dug out the Panama Canal, considered the eighth wonder of the world, which everyone said was an impossible thing to do.

And by the way, 38,000 Americans died to give us one of the greatest engineering feats of all time, the Panama Canal.

This was the unstoppable spirit that created the world's most powerful industries and built the strongest military anyone had ever seen. And today, it is stronger and more powerful than it ever was before.

American grit, boldness, and daring forged heroes like Davy Crockett; Wyatt Earp; Annie Oakley; Teddy Roosevelt; and the legend of the Wild West, Buffalo Bill Cody—these were great, powerful people—whose incredible grandchildren happen to be with us tonight, and they stand alongside one of the first American flags ever to fly over our expanding Nation. It was carried west just as Lewis and Clark began their journey in 1803.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Great to have you. Great to have you.

To honor this audacious and indomitable soul of America, we also have the first flag ever to fly over one of the greatest architectural feats of all time: a thing called the Brooklyn Bridge, one of the most beautiful bridges anywhere in the world. Built a long time ago.

To its right, the banner that flew atop our flagship after America's navy sank the Spanish fleet to the bottom of the Manila Bay, one of the greatest naval victories in history—much like our recent victory by sinking the entire Iranian navy, 159 ships, to the bottom of the sea. All done in just a moment's time. Happened very quickly. We have the greatest military anywhere in the world.

And next to it, we also have the flag that was given to that immortal—I was—just a fantastic, immortal Rough Rider, the one and only—and I was at the museum the other day, at its opening—Theodore Roosevelt when he returned triumphant from Cuba, printed with the words, "Welcome home, Colonel Roosevelt." It was a victor of San Juan Hill. He was a great gentleman.

Americans won the West and built the modern world because America is a nation of winners, and today our country is winning again, and we're winning like never before.

America is back, and we want to keep America great, and we will do so by approving the SAVE America Act, which means all voters must show voter ID. All motors—[laughter]—all voters must provide a little thing called proof of citizenship. And there will be no mail-in ballots, except for illness, disability, military deployment, or travel. And you won't have cheating on the elections anymore. It's very simple.

Together, we are also reasserting the truth that American strength and power is not something to be ashamed of. It is something that we are very, very proud of.

This country has been the greatest force for peace and justice on Earth.

In the last century, we defeated tyrants, demolished evil, and saved freedom again and again.

Ken Schubring was 19 years old when he survived the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

After enemy planes sank ships like the USS *Arizona*, he resolved that he would help America strike back and win. He wanted them to strike back and win.

Flying B-29s in the Pacific, Ken fought from the first day to the very last. He was in the war right from the first day, and he went to the last day, and all the way to the enemy's unconditional surrender. We got an unconditional surrender. He was there.

At 104 years old, and looking really good, Captain Schubring is here tonight, and he is saluting the flag that went down with the *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor, but was raised back up with the help of some unbelievable American patriots. It's a symbol of American defiance.

Please.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Thank you, Captain. Thank you, Captain.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Great job. Thank you very much. You have very good genes.

That's his son. [*Laughter*] His son's going to be around a long time.

Thank you very much, Captain.

On D-day in World War II, Navy Lieutenant Arthur Rose commanded 36 landing craft as part of the largest naval armada in history.

Recalling that sight, he wrote home to his parents, "What a country we are."

At 107 years old, Lieutenant Rose is here to salute one of our Nation's most prized possessions, the flag that flew aboard the first landing craft on D-day and led the first Americans onto the beaches of Normandy to liberate Europe and defeat Nazi fascism forever.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Lieutenant Rose, you are an inspiration to this beautiful crowd, and we thank you very much. Amazing man. A hundred and seven. He's 107.

On Iwo Jima in the Pacific, the Marines faced some of the most brutal combat in the history of warfare. They shed their blood for every inch of mountain that they reached, and when they reached the summit and raised the Stars and Stripes for all to see, it was so special to everybody there—everybody there and everybody watching. They couldn't believe it. It wasn't supposed to happen.

With us today is one of the last survivors of that battle, 101-year-old Marine Corporal Don Graves. And he's here to salute that famous flag he saw rise in the glory of Iwo Jima 81 years ago, and you've all seen that flag many times.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. So, ladies and gentlemen, these are the fighters and the banners of the Greatest Generation. They are the greatest generation.

I hate to admit that, but they are. [*Laughter*]

They saved the world, and they made America very, very proud. We are very proud of you—heroes, all.

And after we vanquished fascism, Americans stood against the evil of communism in the Cold War. And as I said last night at the beautiful Mount Rushmore—what a beautiful place—where Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt loomed over my shoulder as I spoke: America will never be a communist country. Won't happen.

Communism is a loser, and it always will be. The communist system is the opposite of the American system, and the communist system has never worked.

Our warriors did not fight communism on battlefields across the world only to have that menace rear its ugly head right back here in America. We're not going to let it happen.

We like to stop a threat like that immediately and before it begins. It's like a cancer; you've got to cut it out, and you've got to cut it out fast.

Tonight we proudly thank veterans of the war on communism, including Marine Corporal Pat Finn and Private First Class Rudy Meekins, who fought at the famed Battle of Chosin Reservoir in Korea. That was a rough one. Thank you.

Pat fought in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. He had five against him, and he was one. And as you can see, he's around to talk about it. And Rudy was wounded four times, but never stopped shooting and he never stopped moving forward.

And also with us is veteran Sonny Ray, who fought heroically against an enemy force 10 times his unit's size and earned a tremendously deserved Silver Star.

Tonight they salute one of the very first 50-star flags to fly above the field of battle. This was about the beginning of the 50. And right next to it is one of the last flags from Checkpoint Charlie—very famous place on the Berlin Wall—where American freedom finally brought communism crashing down to an end.

Thank you so much. You are really very special. Thank you. Thank you very much.

The Stars and Stripes cast the hammer and sickle into oblivion before, and we will do it again if necessary.

I don't think it's going to be necessary. I think people have learned—they've learned what to do and how to handle it, and we'll—going to handle it very well.

So, gentlemen, I want to thank you very much. You're amazing people, amazing men. Thank you.

How about that, huh? Isn't that great? What an honor it is to be with them. Think of it: 107. That's up there. But hopefully, he's got 20 good years left. *[Laughter]*

Through the generations, Americans have never stopped striving to lift humanity to new heights.

In 1903, the Wright brothers from Ohio fulfilled the age-old dream of mankind to fly. That's right. They're from Ohio. Great State. And within 66 years of inventing the airplane, Americans planted our flag on the moon.

Just 3 months ago, we sent American astronauts back to the far side of the Moon, and this time they flew further from Earth than anyone has ever flown before. And here they are.

So tonight we're joined by that crew of NASA's Artemis—you know—you know the crew, everybody—Artemis II.

And everybody watched. Isn't that amazing? And they became very famous. Everybody watched. I was watching. I don't know what it was, that one got the attention of everybody.

And along with the last man to walk on the Moon, *Apollo 17* astronaut Jack Schmitt.

Thank you, Jack. You look like you could be with them, Jack. You look very good. *[Laughter]* You look very good, Jack.

Thank you very much. What a job. Everybody was watching.

I was with a group of people that normally wouldn't be watching, and we're having a big dinner, and they all said, "We want to turn on—we want to watch Artemis II."

Lot of people said, "What is that?" By the end of the evening, they knew. It was amazing.

And along with Jared—where is Jared? He's so great. He's running NASA. What a job he's done.

So I want to thank you all. Thank you very much. Great job.

So these champions of flight stand this evening beside the flag flown on the Wright brothers' airplane piloted by Orville Wright. It's the exact flag. Very historic. And they are honored to be here. They told me today. They were really amazed to be here with that flag. That's a very special flag, if you're in the world of flying aircraft.

So congratulations to everybody. Fantastic job. Very proud of you.

And I have a special gift for these patriots this morning. On America's 250th birthday, a new flag was flown above the United States Capitol. And tonight, I present it to you to soon be planted by American astronauts on their upcoming return to the moon. And in addition to that, I gave them and all of the great heroes that you saw up on stage tonight and a few others that couldn't quite make the stage—I gave them a very special medal from the White House.

So it's an honor. Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

So then I assume you're going to be heading to Mars. *[Laughter]* Right? We're going to be going to Mars very soon, and I think that's something that we do have in mind. And we're going to do the Moon, and we're going to go from there. We're going to go to Mars, and we're going to continue to be way ahead.

You know, we did Space Force. That was—it was something I was very proud of. And some people smile. They thought it was foolish. And now they're finding it's one of the most important things that we've done.

We were losing to China and to Russia in space, and now we're leading them by giant steps, and it's a great thing, and it's people like that that really—like you—that made it happen.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you very much, Jared.

So, as we celebrate America's unmatched achievements and unlimited potential, we never forget that none of this would have been possible without those who gave everything so that we could reach this 250th year of freedom.

We are honored to be joined by 11 Gold Star family members. The Gold Star family: that is one of the great tributes. It's one of the great—it's one of the great honors. A tough honor. There's nothing tougher than that. But these are amazing people.

Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Come on up.

They went through a lot. Thank you very much.

And that special person is looking up there and looking down at mom and dad, husband, wife—but they're looking down with great pride. You know that. You know that. And we want to thank you for being here. Thank you very much.

And we have medals for you backstage. I brought them. I thought I'd be handing them out about 2 hours ago, 3 hours ago, but we're going to be backstage, and we have beautiful medals for you, for your family, from the White House.

Thank you very much, everybody. We love you.

On this special Fourth of July, we give you our undying gratitude and promise to redeem the sacrifice of your heroes by preserving the America that they love. They loved our country. They sacrificed it all, and these people have sacrificed it all. They've been through hell.

We love you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

From 1776 to today, everywhere the American flag has flown, it has been a symbol of strength, righteousness, and hope, because that is who Americans are.

In 1944, a mother and her daughter huddled in their house in Nazi-occupied Belgium and prayed desperately for their country to be freed. They wanted freed.

As they waited, they found scraps of fabric and stitched together a homemade American flag. It's beautiful, but homemade.

On the day they were finally liberated—and that's what the word is: "liberated"—they gave it to an American soldier as a gift.

Little did they know that that soldier's great-grandfather was none other than the author of our Star-Spangled Banner, Francis Scott Key. And tonight the next generation of the Key family is with us.

Thank you very much. Please. Thank you.

Major Kyle Key has spent 23 years in the U.S. Army, highly respected, and this evening he proudly salutes the old flag that was made by the Belgian woman so beautifully and who knew that America means hope and freedom.

Congratulations. And thank you for being here, very much.

And in conclusion, from a declaration in Philadelphia to victory at Yorktown, from the bustling factories of the heartland to the towering snow-capped summits of Alaska, from the endless frontier of the open Wild West to the magnificent sand dunes at Kitty Hawk, from the glimmering skyline of Manhattan to the far side of the Moon—we just saw that—and from the now safe and beautiful Capital of Washington—think of it: Washington, DC, our Capital. Our Capital is now safe, gleaming, and beautiful again. It's safe again. Went from a very unsafe place 2 years ago to one of the safest cities in the country and one of the most beautiful—to the gleaming waters of the Gulf of America—there is no challenge Americans cannot overcome. There is no place we cannot go. There is no goal we cannot reach. And there is nothing that Americans cannot do.

And we're proving that right now. Our stock market is the strongest it's ever been. We have \$19.2 trillion being invested in our country, which is six times more than ever happened before. We're building more factories in the United States than ever before. Everyone's 401(k)s are at the highest number they've ever been. And more people are working today in the United States than any time in the history of our country.

But, in this country, we can achieve the wildest and most impossible dreams, and no dream in history is bigger or more incredible than the one that started on July 4, 1776.

The war for independence was launched by minutemen, farmers, blacksmiths, tradesmen who took up their muskets against the mightiest army on Earth—the most powerful army—an unbeatable army, until they met us.

No one made them do it. They fought because they knew that a free people must have a free country.

Over 250 years, the world has seen the great empires, vast kingdoms, mighty nations, and terrible tyrants. They came and they went. But after two and a half centuries, this American republic still stands tall and strong, and we love each other.

That showed tonight. You heard it was over, and what happened? You came back.

And this American flag still waves proud and free and beautiful. We have thrived and flourished because our founders were great, our cause was just, our people are brave, our culture is exceptional, and our destiny is written by God.

And as we can see here tonight, after 250 years, the spirit of 1776 still lives within us all. It still roars in the hearts of our Nation's Capital. It still burns in the heart of every patriot, thunders through every city and town, and it still lights the entire world with the glow of American liberty. And there is nothing like that.

At 250 years old, we may be the oldest constitutional republic on Earth, but our country is just getting started, because the best is yet to come.

This is only the dawn of the golden age of America, and on this 250th Fourth of July, we declare, just as they did two and a half centuries ago, that for our country and for our children and for the cause of liberty, we are going to take our country to new levels, to levels not reached. We're going to make it bigger, better, stronger, and we're going to love it even more.

And I just want to thank you. And the inconvenience of lightning can do that, but lightning will never stop you. And I want to thank everybody, and we love you all.

And it's an honor to be your President.

Thank you. God bless you all. God bless you all. Thank you.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We have a great fireworks display tonight, and I'm going to be watching it with you. It's going to start very quickly. So, thank you very much. You're going to really like this.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 p.m. on the National Mall. In his remarks, he referred to Kellie Cody Edwards and Kevin Cody, great-grandchildren of Buffalo Bill Cody; Georgia resident Ken Schubring, Jr.; National Aeronautics and Space Administration Artemis II crewmembers Reid Wiseman, commander, Victor J. Glover, pilot, and Christina H. Koch, mission specialist, and Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen, mission specialist; and Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Jared Isaacman. He also referred to S. 1383. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on July 6.

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