

Today we remember the mother, father, and sister that Corporal Rubin lost to an unspeakable evil. We admire the determination of a young man who sought to repay his American liberators by following in their footsteps, and we recall the selfless acts that gave his comrades strength and hope in their darkest hours.

In the years since Abraham Lincoln signed into law the bill establishing the Medal of Honor, we have had many eloquent tributes to what this medal represents. I like Ted's description. He calls it "the highest honor of the best country

in the world." And today a grateful America bestows this award on a true son of liberty.

I now ask the military aide to read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; former Representative Benjamin A. Gilman of New York and his wife, Georgia; Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., USN, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Col. Rabbi Kenneth J. Leinwand, USA, installation chaplain, Fort Meade.

Remarks During a Briefing on Hurricane Rita in Colorado Springs, Colorado

September 24, 2005

Admiral, thank you very much for a series of briefings that really do comfort me in knowing that our Federal Government is well-organized and well-prepared to deal with Rita. I've come here to watch NORTHCOM in action, to see first hand the capacity of our military to plan, organize, and move equipment to help the people in the affected areas, in this case, of Louisiana and Texas.

We've had full briefings on the storm, it's activities. The first order of business now is to surge search-and-rescue teams, to pull people out of harm's way. Just had an assessment by General Honore, of Lake Charles, Louisiana. It got hit hard. We've got teams on the ground, beginning to analyze the situation and prepare the necessary response to stabilize the situation and, more importantly, save lives there as well.

It's very important for the citizens who have headed into east Texas to understand that even though the storm has passed the coastline, the situation is still dangerous because of potential flooding. A lot of people have left the coastline and headed into east

Texas and parts of western Louisiana. It is important for them to listen carefully to the local authorities about whether or not it is safe to return back to their home. It's going to take a while for the authorities on the ground to fully understand the impact of the flooding. And therefore, people who are safe now ought to remain in safe conditions.

At any rate, Admiral, thank you very much for your hospitality. I appreciate your leadership. I want to thank all the folks who work here in NORTHCOM for doing their duty, which is to organize and rally the assets of the of the Federal Government, to help our fellow citizens who are in need.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 a.m. at Peterson Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Timothy J. Keating, USN, commander, U.S. Northern Command; and Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, USA, commanding general, First United States Army.

The President's Radio Address September 24, 2005

Good morning. This weekend I will visit U.S. Northern Command in Colorado where we're monitoring Hurricane Rita. As the hurricane continues along its destructive path, the American people can know, courageous and dedicated men and women are responding to our citizens in need. We are marshaling resources of the Federal Government to save lives and property, and bring comfort to those who have evacuated because of this storm.

Over the past week, Federal, State, and local governments have been closely coordinating their efforts for Hurricane Rita. The Department of Homeland Security and FEMA prepositioned food, water, ice, and emergency response team, and helped with the evacuations in Texas and Louisiana. Military assets were also prepositioned so they could be deployed immediately after the storm passes.

At this moment, the following Navy ships are in the region: the *Iwo Jima*, the *Shreveport*, the *Tortuga*, the *Grapple*, the *Patuxent*, and the *Comfort*. The Texas National Guard has activated its Guardsmen, nearly 3,500 so far, with more on call if they are needed. Coast Guard cutters, aircraft, and helicopters are in place, ready to rescue, evacuate, and relocate civilians trapped by the storm. And additional Coast Guard air crews and aircraft are now arriving from around the country.

We've also organized and identified civilian volunteers, including more than 200 doctors and more than 400 registered nurses. The American Red Cross is prepared to deliver hundreds of thousands of meals a day. Our Government is taking every step possible to protect life and bring comfort to those affected.

As we respond to Hurricane Rita, we're continuing our efforts to help the citizens of the gulf coast recover from Hurricane Katrina, a storm that has caused unprece-

ented destruction across an entire region. The recovery of Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi is a commitment of the American people, and in this effort, all Americans have a role to play. In the recovery effort, the Federal Government has a vital role, and we'll do our duty. We'll help rebuild roads, bridges, schools, water systems, and other infrastructure in the disaster zone. We will cut through redtape in Washington so we can speed the work of rebuilding and get the gulf coast region back on its feet.

In the recovery effort, State and local leaders will play a vital role in laying out their plans and vision for the future of their communities. Earlier this week, I met with community leaders and local officials in the region to hear their ideas on rebuilding and recovery. I told them that the vision of a revitalized New Orleans should come from the people of New Orleans, and the vision of a new gulf coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama should come from the people of those States. We will do everything we can to guide the recovery effort and help them realize their vision so that communities along the gulf coast are better and stronger than before the storm.

In the recovery effort, the private sector will play a vital role. To rebuild lives and communities, we need to encourage small-business growth in that region, with immediate tax relief and other incentives for job-creating investment. Private enterprise is the engine for creating new jobs in America, and it will be the engine that drives the recovery of the gulf coast.

In the recovery effort, the American people will play a vital role. This week, Laura visited Texas to thank leaders of faith-based groups who've rallied to help their Louisiana neighbors in desperate need. Charities and houses of worship and idealistic men and women across America have