

to liquidate prior-year obligations for contracts and grants made by the Transportation Security Administration. The request is fully offset by transferring unobligated balances and would not increase spending or the deficit.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director

of the Office of Management and Budget. I concur with his comments and observations.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 11.

Remarks on Presenting Posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor to Corporal Jason Dunham *January 11, 2007*

Welcome to the White House. The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor a President can bestow. The medal is given for gallantry in the face of an enemy attack that is above and beyond the call of duty. The medal is part of a cherished American tradition that began in this house with the signature of President Abraham Lincoln.

Since World War II, more than half of those who have been awarded the Medal of Honor have lost their lives in the action that earned it. Corporal Jason Dunham belongs to this select group. On a dusty road in western Iraq, Corporal Dunham gave his own life so that the men under his command might live. This morning it's my privilege to recognize Corporal Dunham's devotion to the Corps and country and to present his family with the Medal of Honor.

I welcome the Vice President's presence; Secretary of Defense Bob Gates; Senator Ted Stevens; Senator John McCain; Senator Craig Thomas—I don't know if you say former marine or marine—marine; Congressman Bill Young and his wife Beverly; Congressman Duncan Hunter; Congressman John Kline, marine; Congressman Randy Kuhl, Corporal Dunham's family's United States Congressman, is with us; Secretary Don Winter; General Pete Pace; General Jim Conway and Annette; Sergeant

Major John Estrada, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

I appreciate the Medal of Honor recipients who have joined us: Barney Barnum, Bob Foley, Bob Howard, Gary Littrell, Al Rascon, Brian Thacker. Thanks for joining us.

I appreciate the Dunham family who have joined us and will soon join me on this platform to receive the honor on behalf of their son: Dan and Deb Dunham; Justin Dunham and Kyle Dunham, brothers; Katie Dunham, sister; and a lot of other family members who have joined us today.

I appreciate the Chaplain for the Navy—excuse me, for the Marine Corps. I didn't mean to insult you. [*Laughter*]

I thank Major Trent Gibson—he was Jason Dunham's commander—company commander; First Lieutenant Brian Robinson, who was his platoon commander. I welcome all the marines from "Kilo-3-7." Thanks for coming, and thanks for serving.

Long before he earned our Nation's highest medal, Jason Dunham made himself—made a name for himself among his friends and neighbors. He was born in a small town in upstate New York. He was a normal kind of fellow. He loved sports. He went to Scio Central School, and he starred on the Tiger basketball, soccer, and baseball teams. And by the way, he still

holds the record for the highest batting average in a single season at .414. He was popular with his teammates, and that could be a problem for his mom. You see, she never quite knew how many people would be showing up for dinner, whether it be her family or the entire basketball team.

He grew up with the riches far more important than money. He had a dad who loved to take his boys on a ride with him when he made his rounds on the dairy farm where he worked. His mom was a school teacher. She figured out the best way to improve her son's spelling was to combine his love for sports with her ability to educate. And so she taught him the words from his reading list when they played the basketball game of "horse." He had two brothers and a sister who adored him.

He had a natural gift for leadership and a compassion that led him to take others under his wing. The Marine Corps took the best of this young man and made it better. As a marine, he was taught that honor, courage, and commitment are not just words; they're core values for a way of life that elevates service above self. As a marine, Jason was taught that leaders put the needs of their men before their own. He was taught that while America's founding truths are self-evident, they also need to be defended by good men and women willing to stand up to determined enemies.

As a leader of a rifle squad in Iraq, Corporal Dunham lived by the values he had been taught. He was a guy everybody looked up to. He was a marine's marine who led by example. He was the kind of person who would stop patrols to play street soccer with the Iraqi schoolchildren. He was the guy who signed on for an extra 2 months in Iraq so he could stay with his squad. As he explained it, he wanted to "make sure that everyone makes it home alive." Corporal Dunham took that promise seriously and would give his own life to make it good.

In April 2004, during an attack near Iraq's Syrian border, Corporal Dunham was

assaulted by an insurgent who jumped out of a vehicle that was about to be searched. As Corporal Dunham wrestled the man to the ground, the insurgent rolled out a grenade he had been hiding. Corporal Dunham did not hesitate. He jumped on the grenade, using his helmet and body to absorb the blast. Although he survived the initial explosion, he did not survive his wounds. But by his selflessness, Corporal Dunham saved the lives of two of his men and showed the world what it means to be a marine.

Deb Dunham calls the Marine Corps her son's second family, and she means that literally. Deb describes her son's relationship to his men this way: "Jay was part guardian angel, part big brother, and all marine." She remembers her son calling from the barracks and then passing the phone to one of his marines, saying, "I've got a guy here who just needs to talk to a mom." Now it's the marines who comfort her. On special days like Christmas or Mother's Day or her birthday, Deb has learned the day will not pass without one of Jason's fellow marines calling to check on her.

With this medal, we pay tribute to the courage and leadership of a man who represents the best of young Americans. With this medal, we ask the God who commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves to wrap His arms around the family of Corporal Jason Dunham, a marine who is not here today because he lived that commandment to the fullest.

I now invite the Dunhams to join me on the stage. And, Colonel, please read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Annette Conway, wife of Gen. James T. Conway, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps; and Rear Adm. Alan T. Baker, USN, Chaplain of the Marine Corps. Following the President's remarks, Lt. Col. Thomas McCarthy, Air Force

Aide to the President, read the citation. The Office of the Press Secretary also released

a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to Military Personnel and Their Families at Fort Benning,
Georgia
January 11, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. You call him “General,” I call him “Wojo.” [*Laughter*] Thank you for the introduction. I’m proud to be with you. I’m proud to be at Fort Benning, Georgia, home of the Infantry. I’m proud to be with those who have volunteered to serve our country, brave men and women who understand that the awesome responsibility of Government is to provide security to the American people. I applaud you for your efforts. I’m proud to be your Commander in Chief. And I’m honored to have lunch with you.

I’m only sorry that my wife hasn’t joined me. She’s the better half of our deal. [*Laughter*] But she sends her love and her respect.

Speaking about families, I have the greatest of respect for not only those of you who wear the uniform but your families as well. I fully understand, in times of danger the military families make a significant sacrifice. And so on behalf of a grateful nation, I say thanks to the families of the soldiers here at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Wojo, I’m glad your wife Candy joined us. We both married well. I appreciate traveling here today with the United States Congressman who represents this area, Congressman Sanford Bishop. Thank you for coming, Congressman. And I’m pleased that Congressman Lynn Westmoreland—he is from the district right north of here—has joined us today. Lynn, thank you for being here.

I appreciate the mayor of Columbus, Georgia, Mayor Wetherington. Mr. Mayor, thank you for being here. Thanks for coming. Mayor Hardin, of Phenix City, Ala-

bama, has joined us. Mr. Mayor, appreciate you coming. I know you didn’t ask—neither of the mayors asked—but sometimes I like to remind them, just go ahead and fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I’m not suggesting there are any; it’s just my advice.

I appreciate all the officials, local officials who are here. I can’t thank the commanders of the base who have arranged this visit—I do want to thank Keith Lovejoy, Colonel Keith Lovejoy, garrison commander of Fort Benning, and his wife Carol; Sergeant Major Doug Greenway, his wife JoAnn. You’ve got a little bit of a following here. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate all the civilian personnel that have joined us to help make this base run. You know, our bases cannot run without the important contributions of civilians, and I appreciate your effort in helping this fine base survive. This is a really important place. This is a place that has a long tradition of turning civilians into highly skilled soldiers. And I can’t thank you enough for the contribution you’re making to the security of this country.

There’s a lot of history here at Fort Benning, Georgia. A lot of folks have left this base to defend freedom and pass the peace. And I appreciate the fact—and I know you do as well—that you’re part of a long tradition of people who have made incredibly important sacrifices so that hundreds of millions of people would enjoy the blessings of liberty and freedom and the world will be more peaceful. And that’s what we’re here to celebrate today.

On September the 11th, our Nation saw firsthand the destructive vision of a new