

President Reagan's Faith-Filled 1984 D-Day Speech Still Resonates Today

As the United States and many other nations are pausing to remember the 80th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, CBN News takes a look back at that heroic day where thousands of men gave their lives to defeat an enemy who sought to enslave the entire world.

On the 40th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, on June 6, 1984, President Ronald Reagan, himself a World War II veteran, gave a speech on the very spot where Allied soldiers stormed the gates of hell and were victorious.

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Although Reagan didn't see combat, he did have a front-row seat. He was a member of Jack Warner's First Motion Picture Unit for the Army Air Corps. From that vantage point, he saw all of the unedited combat footage come from every corner of the world, including footage of the American Army liberating the Nazi death camps at the end of the war.

Forty years ago, as the leader of the free world, President Reagan addressed World War II veterans and world leaders gathered at the site of the U.S. Ranger Monument at Pointe du Hoc, France.

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"The men of Normandy had faith that what they were doing was right, faith that they fought for all humanity, faith that a just God would grant them mercy on this beachhead or on the next. It was the deep knowledge – and pray God we have not

lost it – that there is a profound, moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest. You were here to liberate, not to conquer, and so you and those others did not doubt your cause. And you were right not to doubt,” Reagan said.

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Reagan, a man of deep faith in God, pointed to the faith of those who fought, recalling the sacrifice of all the Allied soldiers who hit the beaches of Normandy on that fateful day – what it meant for the world then and what it means for all of us now.

“The Americans who fought here that morning knew word of the invasion was spreading through the darkness back home. They fought – or felt in their hearts, though they couldn’t know in fact, that in Georgia they were filling the churches at 4 a.m., in Kansas they were kneeling on their porches and praying, and in Philadelphia, they were ringing the Liberty Bell,” Reagan continued.

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“Something else helped the men of D-Day: their rock-hard belief that Providence would have a great hand in the events that would unfold here; that God was an ally in this great cause. And so, the night before the invasion, when Colonel Wolverton asked his parachute troops to kneel with him in prayer he told them: Do not bow your heads, but look up so you can see God and ask His blessing in what we’re about to do. Also that night, General Matthew Ridgway on his cot, listening in the darkness for the promise God made to Joshua: ‘I will not fail thee nor forsake thee’.”

He finished, “Here, in this place where the West held

together, let us make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we understand what they died for. Let our actions say to them the words for which Matthew Ridgway listened: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

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