

Lt. Ammon Memorial Remarks

Peace does not preserve itself, freedom is not free. The work of building a better tomorrow for all humanity entails sacrifice.

Tragically, that sacrifice has touched the Northwest Navy family. We lost a shipmate, and a friend...a Sailor working to preserve peace, to build a better tomorrow for the people of Afghanistan, and for the people of America.

President Kennedy said, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers." Today we're here to honor and remember Lieutenant Jeff Ammon. Many have inquired since his death why a submarine officer was serving in the mountains of Afghanistan. The answer is that Lt. Ammon was an officer in the United States Navy. A resourceful, flexible, and dedicated member of our Armed Forces, serving where it pleased the Navy to send him.

Jeff enlisted in the Navy in 1988... the biggest threat to America's future was the Soviet Union, and as a submariner, Jeff was on the frontlines of the Cold War.

But now, our country, and our very civilization, are now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing states.

The skills, talent, and dedication that Sailors used to help win the Cold War are needed now to win the war against these new threats... and sometimes, those frontlines are a long way from the water.

Failed states are a major threat, and bombs and bullets aren't always the best weapons we have to fight and save them. Lives and whole societies must be rebuilt and enhanced ... decades of violence and oppression overcome. .. we have to connect those societies with the rest of the World. It's a long difficult, job, and it's the job that Lt. Ammon, like so many of our Sailors, volunteered to do.

The historian Stephen Ambrose has written about America's citizen soldiers of World War II. He said, "they knew the difference between

right and wrong, and they were unwilling to live in a world where wrong triumphed, and so they fought and they won, and we and all succeeding generations are the eternal beneficiaries of their sacrifice."

Those characteristics are not unique to the World War II generation... they are just as applicable to today's military members, and certainly applicable to people like Jeff Ammon. His emails home reveal much about his feelings towards his mission in Afghanistan. "The people in this region will be successful in the future... you could just see it," he wrote. "You can only make so much difference in the short time you have over here.... But the kids are the ones that will benefit."

Afghans and Americans will be eternal beneficiaries of Jeff's service and sacrifice. But we are not just the **beneficiaries** of his sacrifice, we are also its **stewards**.

While today we remember and reflect on his life and of his loss, we should also keep in mind the meaning of his sacrifice. Freedom,

opportunity and prosperity are precious blessings; they were not left to us in perpetuity, they were not gained without great sacrifice, and they will not be preserved without purpose and without valor. Jeff was working with purpose, working with valor, to maintain those things we hold most precious, and to give them as a gift to a nation not his own.

Every American who gave his or her life for our country was, in one way or another, a victim of a peace that faltered...We know that if diplomacy is not backed by real and credible threats of force, it can be empty, and even dangerous.

As members of the armed forces of the United States of America, and stewards of Jeff's sacrifice, we have an unending obligation to stay strong, to keep deterring war when we can and fight when we must, and to use the power given us to make a better world for our children and the children of the world.

Gail, Tyler, Kyle... Through Jeff's career, you too have provided a great service to our Navy, our Nation, and the world. And now you

have shared terribly in the sacrifice Jeff was called to make. We can never come close to adequately expressing our thanks, but know that you three have the eternal gratitude of everyone gathered here today.

Thank you all for coming to honor LT Jeff Ammon and his family.