
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

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1944 July 27

**Informal remarks made during
the Pearl Harbor Trip**

At luncheon at Officers Club and Mess, Schofield Barracks.... 7/27/44

I am always horrified when I have to make a speech. I am not here for that purpose. But I do want to tell you all about one experience of my life. Ten years ago today I was out here giving a review. Here there has been the most amazing change in one place I have ever seen. I remember that review very well. There were some First World War tanks in it. I think that of the twelve that took part seven broke down before they could get past. Some difference in ten years! Half the trucks broke down before they could get across. And the aircraft at Schofield -- not more than 15 or 20 -- three-fourths of them got past, though whether they got back safely on the earth, I don't know.

At that time Hawaii was one of our major outposts, the outpost. We weren't allowed to fortify Guam. Today it is no longer an outpost, it is one of our rear areas, in one sense of the word. From here we are conducting a campaign, one more advanced than any other campaign of the past, largely because of the good work you are doing here at this advance base. *P* I am awfully glad to come back here and see it with my own eyes ten years to the day later. I wish we could stay here -- see more. It is being felt all through this area -- all the way down to General MacArthur's area, which, thank the Lord, is coming a little closer towards us, and automatically closer toward the enemy, than it was two years ago. *P* It is good to see the three services together, because I think this morning I have seen not only the Marine Corps Air, but the Navy Air and the Army Air working so closely together in all their component parts. I wish everybody back home could see and understand a little more of what's going on out here. *P* It has been good to see you.

At review. (Schofield Barracks)

7/27/44

Officers and men of the Seventh Division. *P* Your Commander in Chief brings you greetings from your own families, your own homes, to you here at this spot, which, thank God, is still a part of the United States. *P* I have heard much of what the Seventh Division has done. We are all proud of the Seventh, of what it has done, and what it is doing. And that is another reason why I wish you all the good luck in the world.

To Seabees (Pearl Harbor)

7/27/44

Boys, I just want to say "howdy do." *P* This is the first bunch of Seabees ~~SEABEES~~ I have inspected or looked at overseas. I think you are known on every ocean and every continent -- all over the world. The Seabees have come forward as an institution more quickly than any one I know of in the whole of our history, and all of us back home and out at the front are mighty proud of you. *P* It is good to see you. Men of the Fleet Marine Force. (Pearl Harbor) 7-27-44

I am glad to have this chance to see another bunch of Marines. *P* You know, it isn't generally known, but about 30 years ago, or a little more, I was in charge of the U.S. Marine Corps. It wasn't under the Secretary in those days, it was under the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, so that I got to know your ancestors very well. And I follow what the Marines are doing in this war with tremendous lot of interest. *P* I am very, very proud of you. *P* It has been good to see you.

At Submarine Test Center (Loyal Hawaiian Hotel): I just want to say a word of greeting to all of you people now back home. You submarine officers and men of the Pacific, I think by now the people back home realize all the submarine service has accomplished. I think they understand, not only the purpose but its accomplishments. We are getting excellent reports from all over the world of what you are doing to help win the war. *P* I was here ten years ago, lived right here in these quarters, on the top floor. I hope you will be just as comfortable and happy here as I was, because you deserve it a lot more.

STATEMENTS FILE

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT THE NAVY YARD, PEARL HARBOR, SATURDAY, JULY 29, 1944.

I am glad to be back again after ten years, and I hope it won't be ten years before I come back the third time. We are awfully proud back in Washington, back in the United States, of what is being done here. One thing here that appeals to me very strongly ~~and that~~ is the element of speed. We are just about twice as fast today as we ever were before, and we are going to make it even faster.

Today ~~we have got~~ without question, the largest and best equipped navy in the world, and that is something ~~to be proud of~~.

Now I am a part of the Pearl Harbor navy yard. I was just given membership in the Georgia State Club. That makes me proud, too. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS MADE AT NAVAL HOSPITAL, ARII, HONOLULU, T.H.
SATURDAY, JULY 29, 1944.

I am quite familiar with this hospital, on paper. Admiral McIntire and I have spent a good long time in the preparation of the plans in a spot where it is not nearly as pleasant as it is here. I think there are thousands of people in Washington who would be willing to come up here and take the places of these boys from Saipan. Washington in summertime is not a pleasant place to live. That is why I think all of you sick and wounded are very, very fortunate to be here.

It is good to see you, good to know of the excellent service you of the staff have been doing in bringing ~~these~~ these people back to health. Bringing people who have been wounded and the sick ~~back to full health~~ is something that has progressed enormously since I went through the first world war. I wish I could see all of you here today-- the staff, the wounded, and the sick. Your whole country is very, very proud of you.

^{the}
Address at Chief Petty Officers' Mess Hall, Naval Station,
Adak, Alaska, August 3, 1944, before representative
group of service men.

"Gentlemen: I like your food. I like your climate.
(laughter) You don't realize the thousands upon
thousands of people who would give anything in the
world to swap places with you people. I have seen
some of them. Of course I haven't been down to the
Southwest Pacific, but last year I saw two battalions
of our engineers down in Liberia, and I would much rather
be here than in Liberia.

It's a treat to see this place and see what's been
done here in such a short time. Say, for example, the
spot where the Army moved a stream and made a harbor
out of it. I have never been to this country before
but I know the parallel of it very well. I've spent
lots of time up around the coasts of Maine and New-
foundland. And Americans of all kinds can live here
and get by with it all right. I am thrilled with what
we have done here. I wish more people back home could
come out to Alaska - and see what we have done here
in an incredible short time.

When the Japs first struck out here - not here but
west of here, two years ago, folks back home, especially
on the Coast, got panicky. The newspapers were in the
lead. Well, they figured out that from these islands
the enemy was going to come down and destroy San Francisco,
Seattle and Los Angeles. The invasion was on! The conti-
nent of the United States was going to be captured by
the Japs! And of course, we live in a pretty big country.
The people in the Midwest didn't quite see the peril.
There was a lot of feeling, a lot of fear, a lot of
laughter about the Pacific Coast. And the mere fact
of what we have done in regaining the islands west of
here from the Japs has had a tremendous moral effect on
all of the United States. People see things now - on
the war - from a more ordinary common sense point of
view. People realize, I think, the fact that we are
actually engaged in a war, either working or fighting,
all over the Pacific, all over Europe and in many parts
of Africa. They realize for the first time that this is
a global war. That is one reason why many of us realize
that it is a great privilege to take part in this kind
of thing, a thing that has changed our people's point
of view tremendously.

I have to be in close contact every day with the Army and Navy on the potential defense of the United States. ^{and} I was thinking, a little while ago, that if back in 1940, or early in 1941, I had said to the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and the Navy, "Our next war is going to be in the Aleutians and down in the Southwest Pacific," they would have all laughed at me. They are the experts at that sort of thing. I am not an expert. I am just an ordinary American. We can see now that we Americans were caught unprepared, because we were ordinary human beings, following the best advice we had at the time. No one would have guessed in 1941 that we would be attacked in such an unsportsmanlike manner as we were. No one would have visualized Pearl Harbor, either out there or in Washington. But if we had known then what we know now we would have expected an attack in 1941.

No one then visualized the great many thousands of our men in the services who would be up here in Alaska, first throwing the Japs out, and, secondly, making it impossible for the Japs to come back. Live and learn. That is one thing we are all doing these days. In the days to come I won't trust the Japs around the corner. We have got to make it impossible for them - and we are all doing a great deal to make it impossible for them - to repeat this particular route of access to the United States. That is why it is important, this work we are all doing on this spot. We are going to make it humanly possible to deny access to or aggressive attack by the Japanese of another generation against any part of the United States.

And so we are all taking part in a very interesting and historical development - the protection of our kind of life, our kind of civilization back home, and at the same time we are gaining a better knowledge of a different part of the United States. We will remember that this is the United States, and that it is always going to be a part of the United States.

It has made me very happy, seeing with my own eyes the development of this place, the greatest part of which is not even one year old. What we are doing here is going to be of real value to our national defense and to our national growth.

I was talking to Admiral Nimitz down at Hawaii the other day, talking about the problem of a lot of people - people

in our services who want to go places after this war. There's a certain percentage of our people who haven't got roots back in the villages, on the farms - people who want to go on pioneering. And after all, the ancestors of most all of us, from one generation back to ten generations, were pioneers in a pioneer country. And although this is not the best climate in the world up here in the Aleutians, it isn't the worst, and Alaska - the mainland of Alaska - is a big country.

P I was noticing, just the other day, that if you superimpose Alaska on a map of the United States, one corner of it, the southeastern corner, would land somewhere around Charleston, South Carolina, and these islands - the Aleutian Islands - would end up somewhere near Los Angeles. And the mainland of Alaska would occupy nearly all of the Central and Mid-western states - Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas. It's an enormous territory. Well, it is going to open up for those in the services who want to start life in a new spot; and there are people like that. I wouldn't say we will bring a hundred thousand people to Alaska but there are those who will at least want to go to a country much of which is good land to live on. There are an awful lot of people in Norway, Sweden and Finland who live in a country very similar to this. In spite of the climate and, in winter, the long nights, they are a thoroughly happy people with a very high type of civilization. That is why I am not particularly sorry for a lot of people in the services. Alaska opens up a new field, and a very promising field too, from all that I hear of its possibilities.

It has been a privilege to be with you, and to see this pioneer work. You are doing it awfully well. Doing a good job, first, for the defense of your country, and, secondly, you are doing it for the future of our nation. You are making our future secure for the years to come, more so than it has been in the past; and it took this war to make us do it.

It is good to be with you. Good luck. I won't say I want to stay longer, for I have to see other places too. My time is limited and I have to be careful in scheduling it. By the time I get back home next week, I will have been gone thirty days - my limit, when Congress is left in Washington all alone. (Laughter and applause).

INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT MADE

DURING THE PEARL HARBOR TRIP

July 27, 1944...At Luncheon at Officers Club and Mess --
Schofield Barracks

I am always horrified when I have to make a speech. I am not here for that purpose. But I do want to tell you all about one experience of my life. Ten years ago today, I was out here taking a review. Here there has been the most amazing change in one place that I have ever seen. I remember that review very well. There were some First World War tanks in it. I think that of the twelve that took part, seven broke down before they could get past. Some difference in ten years! Half the trucks broke down before they could get across. And the aircraft at Schofield -- not more than fifteen or twenty -- three-fourths of them got past, though whether they got back safely on the earth, I don't know.

At that time, Hawaii was one of our major outposts, the outpost. We weren't allowed to fortify Guam. Today, it is no longer an outpost, it is one of our rear areas, in one sense of the word. From here we are conducting a campaign, one more advanced than any other campaign of the past, largely because of the good work you are doing here at this advance base.

I am awfully glad to come back here and see it with my own eyes ten years to the day later. I wish we could

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

I am always surprised when I have to make a speech. I am not sure for what purpose. But I do want to tell you all about one experience of my life. Two years ago today, I was out here - looking a review. There have been two more reviews since then. I remember the change in me since that I have ever seen. I remember that review very well. There were some things which we learned in it. I think that of the twelve last week, seven were taken before they could get past. Some difference in the two reviews. The review was done before they could get past. The director of the review -- not more than fifteen or twenty -- three-fourths of them got past, though whether they got back really on the review, I don't know.

At last time, Lowell was one of our major supporters. The support. He wasn't allowed to testify. Today, it is no longer an support, it is one of our best ones, in one sense of the word. From now we are conducting a campaign, one more advanced than any other campaign of the past, largely because of the good work you are doing here at this advance stage.

I am deeply glad to come back here and see it again at this time. I am glad to see the way things are going.

stay here -- see more. It is being felt all through this area -- all the way down to General MacArthur's area, which thank the Lord is coming a little closer towards us, and automatically closer toward the enemy than it was two years ago.

It is good to see the three services together, because I think this morning I have seen not only the Marine Corps Air, but the Navy Air and the Army Air working so closely together in all their component parts. I wish everybody back home could see and understand a little more of what is going on out here.

It has been good to see you.

July 27, 1944...At Review --- Schofield Barracks.

Officers and men of the Seventh Division.

Your Commander in Chief brings you greetings from your own families, your own homes, to you here at this spot, which thank God is still a part of the United States.

I have heard much of what the Seventh Division has done. We are all proud of the Seventh, of what it has done, and what it is doing. And that is another reason why I wish you all the good luck in the world.

July 27, 1944...To the SeaBees --- Pearl Harbor.

Boys, I just want to say "howdy do."

This is the first bunch of SeaBees I have inspected or looked at overseas. I think you are known on every ocean and every continent -- all over the world.

The SeaBees have come forward as an institution more quickly than any other one I know of in the whole of our history, and all of us back home and out at the front are mighty proud of you.

It is good to see you.

July 27, 1944...To Men of the Fleet Marine Force -- Pearl Harbor.

I am glad to have this chance to see another bunch of Marines.

You know, it isn't generally known, but about thirty years ago or a little more, I was in charge of the U. S. Marine Corps -- it wasn't under the Secretary in those days, it was under the Assistant Secretary of the Navy -- so that I got to know your ancestors very well. And I follow what the Marines are doing in this war with a tremendous lot of interest.

I am very, very proud of you.

It has been good to see you.

July 27, 1944...At the Submarine Rest Center --- Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

I just want to say a word of greeting to all of you people -- a word from back home. You submarine officers and men of the Pacific, I think by now the people back home realize all that the submarine service has accomplished. I think they understand not only the purpose but its accomplishments. We are getting excellent reports from all over the world of what you are doing to help win the war.

I was here ten years ago -- lived right here in these quarters, on the top floor. I hope you will be just as comfortable and happy here as I was, because you deserve it a lot more.

July 29, 1944...At the Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor.

I am glad to be back again after ten years, and I hope it won't be ten years before I come back the third time. We are awfully proud back in Washington, back in the United States, of what is being done here. One thing here that appeals to me very strongly is the element of speed. We are just about twice as fast today as we ever were before, and we are going to make it even faster.

Today, without question we have got the largest and best equipped navy in the world, and that is something of

which to be proud.

Now I am a part of the Pearl Harbor navy yard. I was just given membership in the Georgia State Club. That makes me proud, too.

Thank you very much.

July 29, 1944...At the Naval Hospital, Aiea, Honolulu, T.H.

I am quite familiar with this hospital, on paper. Admiral McIntire and I have spent a good long time in the preparation of the plans in a spot where it is not nearly so pleasant as it is here. I think there are thousands of people in Washington who would be willing to come up here and take the places of these boys from Saipan. Washington in summertime is not a pleasant place to live. That is why I think all of you sick and wounded are very, very fortunate to be here.

It is good to see you, good to know of the excellent service you of the staff have been doing in bringing these people back to health. Bringing people back to full health who have been wounded and the sick is something that has progressed enormously since I went through the first World War.

I wish I could see all of you here today -- the staff, the wounded, and the sick. Your whole country is very, very proud of you.

August 3, 1944...At the Chief Petty Officers' Mess Hall, Naval Station, Adak, Alaska, Before a Representative Group of Ser-vicemen.

Gentlemen, I like your food. I like your climate. (laughter) You don't realize the thousands upon thousands of people who would give anything in the world to swap places with you. I have seen some of them. Of course, I haven't been down to the Southwest Pacific, but last year I saw two battalions of our engineers down in Liberia, and I would much rather be here than in Liberia.

It's a treat to see this place and see what has been done here in such a short time. Say, for example, the spot where the Army moved a stream and made a harbor out of it. I have never been to this country before, but I know the parallel of it very well. I have spent lots of time up around the coasts of Maine and Newfoundland. And Americans of all kinds can live here and get by with it all right. I am thrilled with what we have done here. I wish more people back home could come out to Alaska and see what we have done here in an incredibly short time.

When the Japs first struck out here -- not here but west of here two years ago, folks back home, especially on the Coast, got panicky. The newspapers were in the lead. Well, they figured out that from these islands the enemy was going to come down and destroy San Francisco, Seattle and Los Angeles. The invasion was on! The continent of the United States was going to be captured by the Japs!

And of course, we live in a pretty big country. The people in the Midwest didn't quite see the peril. There was a lot of feeling, a lot of fear, a lot of laughter about the Pacific Coast. And the mere fact of what we have done in regaining the islands west of here from the Japs has had a tremendous moral effect on all of the United States. People see things now -- on the war -- from a more ordinary common sense point of view. People realize, I think, the fact that we are actually engaged in a war, either working or fighting, all over the Pacific, all over Europe and in many parts of Africa. They realize for the first time that this is a global war. That is one reason why many of us realize that it is a great privilege to take part in this kind of thing, a thing that has changed our people's point of view tremendously.

I have to be in close contact every day with the Army and Navy on the potential defense of the United States, and I was thinking a little while ago that if back in 1940 or early in 1941 I had said to the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and the Navy, "Our next war is going to be in the Aleutians and down in the Southwest Pacific," they would have all laughed at me. They are the experts at that sort of thing. I am not an expert. I am just an ordinary American. We can see now that we Americans were caught unprepared, because we were ordinary human beings, following the best advice we had at the time. No one would have guessed in 1941 that we would be attacked in such an unsportsmanlike manner as we were. No one would have visualized Pearl Harbor, either out there or in Washington.

But if we had known then what we know now, we would have expected an attack in 1941.

No one then visualized the great many thousands of our men in the services who would be up here in Alaska, first throwing the Japs out, and secondly making it impossible for the Japs to come back. Live and learn. That is one thing we are all doing these days. In the days to come I won't trust the Japs around the corner. We have got to make it impossible for them -- and we are all doing a great deal to make it impossible for them -- to repeat this particular route of access to the United States. That is why it is important, this work we are all doing on this spot. We are going to make it humanly possible to deny access to or aggressive attack by the Japanese of another generation against any part of the United States.

And so we are all taking part in a very interesting and historical development -- the protection of our kind of life, our kind of civilization back home, and at the same time we are gaining a better knowledge of a different part of the United States. We will remember that this is the United States, and that it is always going to be a part of the United States.

It has made me very happy, seeing with my own eyes the development of this place, the greatest part of which is not even one year old. What we are doing here is going to be of real value to our national defense and to our national growth.

I was talking to Admiral Nimitz down at Hawaii the other day, talking about the problem of a lot of people --

people in our services who want to go places after this war. There is a certain percentage of our people who haven't got roots back in the villages, on the farms -- people who want to go on pioneering. And after all, the ancestors of most all of us, from one generation back to ten generations, were pioneers in a pioneer country. And although this is not the best climate in the world up here in the Aleutians, it isn't the worst, and Alaska -- the mainland of Alaska -- is a big country.

I was noticing, just the other day, that if you superimpose Alaska on a map of the United States, one corner of it, the southeastern corner, would land somewhere around Charleston, South Carolina, and these islands -- the Aleutian Islands -- would end up somewhere near Los Angeles. And the mainland of Alaska would occupy nearly all of the Central and Midwestern States -- Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas. It's an enormous territory.

Well, it is going to open up for those in the services who want to start life in a new spot; and there are people like that. I wouldn't say we will bring a hundred thousand people to Alaska, but there are those who will at least want to go to a country much of which is good land to live on. There are an awful lot of people in Norway, Sweden and Finland who live in a country very similar to this. In spite of the climate, and, in winter, the long nights, they are a thoroughly happy people with a very high type of civilization. That is why I am

not particularly sorry for a lot of people in the services. Alaska opens up a new field, and a very promising field too, from all that I hear of its possibilities.

It has been a privilege to be with you, and to see this pioneer work. You are doing it awfully well -- doing a good job, first, for the defense of your country, and secondly you are doing it for the future of our nation. You are making our future secure for the years to come, more so than it has been in the past; and it took this war to make us do it.

It is good to be with you. Good luck. I won't say I want to stay longer, for I have to see other places too. My time is limited, and I have to be careful in scheduling it. By the time I get back home next week, I will have been gone thirty days -- my limit, when Congress is left in Washington all alone.

(laughter and applause)

August 9, 1944...On Leaving the U.S.S. BALTIMORE.

Captain Calhoun, Officers and Men of the BALTIMORE, I wanted to say just a word of goodbye to you, but before doing so I want to say a word of thanks to you. I have had a wonderful trip. It has been a grand privilege, first to get away from Washington, and secondly to have had this wonderful

cruise with you. I have learned a lot. That is one reason why I am still taking trips whenever I get the chance, and I prefer trips on cruisers of the United States Navy.

I have never been on one of these postwar, post-treaty cruisers before, but I am very familiar with the old heavy cruiser of the 10,000-ton class. It is an amazing thing to me to see the improvements that have been made. I think this is not only a wonderful ship, but also a happy crew, because of all that I had read before I came on board of the really grand record this ship and you people on the BALTIMORE have made. That is something the whole Navy will always be proud of. Not many ships in the entire service have had so many opportunities for combat in time of war as this ship has had, or have conducted themselves better -- or made a greater record.

And now there comes the time when I am going back to work, and I take it that you are going back, I hope, for a chance to play a little. And you richly deserve it. I hope you have a very happy liberty, and when the time comes all of you will be back in service continuing this tremendously important work, the work of winning this the greatest of all wars.

And when you get through and get home, I wish for you many years of happiness with your families, and a sense that you have done your part for your country and, furthermore, that the President of the United States has told you that he is mighty proud of you.

Good luck. Goodbye.