



President Bud Markel delivering the dedication speech

The dedication speech

We are gathered here today to dedicate this tree and this plaque. We stand with head bowed in reverence to the meaning of what this ginkgo tree and the bronze plaque represent. We are here to pay our respects to all of the service personnel who are buried here, not just to those who belong to the 484th Bomb Group. You will note the colors standing as if in proud attention. As you will recall, we too paid respects to our flag each day in a military camp, post, or airfield at retreat. We stood at attention with our right hand in salute as the national flag was lowered. We did this again today during the pledge of allegiance. For this dedication is a solemn ceremony. It is our way of honoring the deceased by taking this time to be with them. We stand here to comfort our own spiritual needs too.

In honor of our fallen comrades in this National Cemetery, we add the names of the 484th Bomb Group's personnel who made their last mission in defense of freedom and those who have passed on in the ensuing years. We add their names to all of the other distinguished soldiers who reside in quiet rest within these hallowed grounds.

This ginkgo tree the very symbol of life stands guard over this plot that is called site 33. It stands also as a gateway to the tomb of the unknown soldier just up the road from here on this same Roosevelt Drive.

We pay our respects to all who lie here this day in this last camp and pantheon. We say to all the interred: we remember your bravery, your deeds, your accomplishments, and why you earned the awards and medals of a proud country. You are in good company here in the rolling greens of Virginia overlooking the city of Washington with its many monuments. This capitol city once burned to the ground is the symbol of the great strength that resides within every resident of the grand United States of America. We cannot betray our war dead and must continue to cherish the ideals on which this proud land was founded and for which they offered their lives. We stand here with proud determination not to let their sacrifice go wanting.



Bugler playing taps



(L to R) Adolph Marcus Bud Pressel, and Aurelio Lopez flank the wreath and plaque.