



Homeland Security

October 19, 2007

Colonel Christopher Knight
Director, Florida Highway Patrol
2900 Apalachee Parkway
Neil Kirkman Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Colonel Knight:

On October 10, 2007, Secretary Michael Chertoff honored fallen law enforcement officers with remarks at the 16th Annual Wreathlaying Ceremony at the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial. I would like to take this opportunity to share his words with you.

The Department of Homeland Security reveres the members of America's law enforcement community for their selfless service and daily sacrifice. Police officers are the ground troops in our battle to protect the homeland against dangerous people.

As Secretary Chertoff noted, "law enforcement transcends crime-fighting roles and responsibilities and is now a critical element of our national defense and our national security." Thank you for your continued efforts to make our Nation safer, stronger, and better prepared.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doug Hoelscher".

Doug Hoelscher
Executive Director
Homeland Security Advisory Committees



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REMARKS BY HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY MICHAEL CHIERTOFF AT THE 16th ANNUAL WREATHLAYING CEREMONY HONORING THE FALLEN LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS OF 2007

Thank you for the introduction. General, thank you for your remarks. Chief Coburn, Chief Lanier, I look forward to hearing your remarks as well. And of course, to the members of the law enforcement community, most especially the family members of those who have fallen in the line of duty, welcome.

We're here this afternoon to pay tribute to those who have given their lives in the line of duty, protecting our freedom and safeguarding our country and our communities. The names inscribed at this memorial represent over 200 years of sacrifice; sacrifice by officers who swore to uphold the law, to protect our nation's citizens, and to defend the freedoms that we all enjoy.

As we reflect on those who gave their lives, let's not forget that each name also commemorates the sacrifice of the family of each of the fallen; the sacrifices of countless family members who were left behind – husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters – whose loved ones put on a badge, went to work and sadly did not return home. Whether securing our nation's borders, combating gang violence and illegal drugs, or patrolling our cities and towns, these fallen officers deserve our utmost respect, and their families our utmost gratitude.

Sixteen years ago when this memorial was dedicated, law enforcement officers were faced with a wide range of risks. But on that day, no one could have imagined how their responsibilities would change after September 11th, here in the 21st century. For as we know in our post-9/11 world, law enforcement transcends crime-fighting roles and responsibilities and is now a critical element of our national defense and our national security.

Time and again, we see that the difference between a successful attack and a thwarted plot lies with an alert police officer patrolling his or her beat, and also lies with close cooperation between state and federal agencies working on the tip of a police officer, a state trooper or any one of the thousands of law enforcement officers who are out there, alert, every single day.

It is this sense of a shared commitment to securing our homeland that binds together law enforcement officers and first responders all across the country at every level of government. So as we honor our fallen and remember their families, let us also reflect on their courage and the sacrifices they made and continue to make to ensure that our nation remains free, safe and secure.

I want to personally thank each of the family members today who are here commemorating the loss of loved ones. And I want to ask that all our nation's officers continue the work they started and continue to carry on the proud tradition of service to the people of this country. Thank you and God bless you all.