



**Dedication Ceremony for  
the Center for the Families of the Fallen**

**Wednesday, 6 January 2010**



**General Norty Schwartz**

**As Prepared  
for Delivery  
~10 min.  
Page 1 of 3**

Good morning, and thank you all for being here today. Doctor Biden, your presence speaks volumes. You should know that Doctor Biden's mother is not well; and yet, she is here today. It represents her commitment to military families. Thank you, ma'am, very much. Senator Carper, Senator Kaufman, Congressman Castle, Mayor Carey, and elected officials from the area, we're so grateful for your joining us here. Let me also highlight General Shaud (retired); he has with him a young lady who is the only spouse of a fallen hero here today. So, Nicole, who truly understands what we're doing, please stand to be recognized for your family's service.

To all: your attendance here today, at this significant occasion, is a clear message of support and respect to our brave men and women in uniform, especially to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and to their families who bear such profound loss.

I would also like to publicly acknowledge my personal gratitude for the enormous, untiring, and very personal efforts of Colonel Bob Edmondson and his highly skilled and dedicated team; of many others here at Dover, on the Air Staff, and in the Service Organization community, for their incredible work on this center; and, of many a valued volunteer, like Jodie Newton.

For many of us, this dedication is perhaps a bittersweet event. This center is emblematic of our genuine gratitude to the families of our fallen service members, and is the result of the hard work of all who are dedicated to expressing that respect, in ways large and small. In an ideal world – one that is universally committed to resolving disputes in a peaceful manner – a “Center for the Families of the Fallen” perhaps would not be necessary.

But alas, it is, as all here know well. The difficult work of dedicated individuals in distinctive service to our country continues. Oftentimes, this effort comes at a heavy cost, borne by our Nation's service members and dedicated civilian employees of our Government, like those recently in DEA and



CIA, who together are among the best and most generous that this country has to offer. They all come from thoughtful and giving families – mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters – from all walks of life: from bustling big cities to quaint rural towns across our diverse country. Yet, they are united in a shared belief in the ideals of our Nation, and of dignified service in common cause.

We can offer only abiding respect and sincere gratitude to them and to their families. Memorials and locales of honor, such as this center, serve as evidence of our sincerity. These symbols are fitting and necessary, but certainly are not equal to the devotion of our fallen heroes. That debt, we all soberly remember, is one that can never be fully repaid.

What we can do is never to forget their commitment and dedication, and never to stop believing in those high aspirations for which so many heroes have fallen. We must devote ourselves to continuing their noble efforts, and to ensuring that their sacrifice will always guide the attainment of our greatest hopes. This Nation was borne of the fundamental desire to be free; and, as long as serious challenges to our way of life exist in our world, good men and women must continue to don our Nation's uniform or appropriate civilian attire, and answer the call. Our most serious obligation is to lead in a way that minimizes the likelihood of losing a teammate; but, when we properly honor our fallen, we must also properly care for their families.

This center is one representation of our fidelity to this commitment, so that when families from all over our country come to receive their loved ones for the last time, they do so in a place that befits their grief, and can begin to offer them comfort, support, and the sincere thanks of a grateful Nation.

Perhaps someday, a world without armed conflict will no longer elude us; but, until then, this Nation requires and values the efforts of its service men and women, and the love and support of their family members who sustain their efforts.



I want to thank all of you for attending this ceremony, and I appreciate your ongoing support for all families with fallen heroes. We wish all of them peace of mind and comfort in their time of sorrow, made possible, at least in a small way, by this solemn place.

Thank you.