

History will not forget Marine sacrifices

SGT. SARA WOOD

American Forces Press Service

CAMPLEJEUNE, N.C. – America is not a country that takes its military for granted, and its citizens do realize the tremendous sacrifices servicemembers have made and continue to make, Vice President Richard B. Cheney said here Monday.

Speaking to a group of recently redeployed Marines from 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, Cheney said that the nation grieves for the men and women who have given their lives in freedom's cause, but that families should be consoled by the knowledge that these servicemembers were providing hope for the future.

"We can only say with complete certainty that these Americans served in a noble and necessary cause and their sacrifice has made our nation and the world more secure," he said.

In the audience were members of the 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, an Ohio-based Reserve unit that lost 48 Marines and sailors attached to it in Iraq, with 20 of those losses occurring in a single week in August. The vice president's visit was meaningful to these Marines, who faced a lot of challenges while deployed, said Sgt. Michael Beeson, headquarters platoon sergeant for Reserve battalion's Company I. Cheney's words about the nobility of the cause in Iraq rang true to him, Beeson said.

"There have been a lot of good Marines and fellow Soldiers from other branches that have done the same thing that we have," he said. "We've all done a good job and we'll continue to do a good job."

Marines have played a critical role in helping Iraq secure democracy and removing threats to the U.S. and other free nations, Cheney said, which is an investment in the future.

"America will continue to encourage free markets, democracy and tolerance because these are the ideas and the aspirations that overcome violence and turn societies to the pursuit of peace," he said. "As the peoples of that region experience new hope, progress and control over their own destiny, we will see the power of freedom to change our world and the terrible threat will be removed from the lives of our children and our grandchildren."

There has already been superb progress in Iraq, Cheney said, and Americans can be confident in the future because the Iraqi people value their liberty and want to be in charge of their destiny. The victory of freedom in Iraq will inspire democracies in other nations, and terrorists will not succeed in their cause, he said.

"Our terrorist enemies will fail because the resolve of America and its allies will not be shaken," he said.

After addressing the crowd, Cheney presented



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Vice President Richard B. Cheney speaks to a group of Marines from the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Oct. 3. Many of the Marines in the audience recently returned from Iraq.

Purple Hearts to five Marines who had been wounded in combat. Two Marines were receiving their second Purple Heart.

Cheney then had lunch with 23 Marines from the 3/25th, who discussed their experiences in Iraq.

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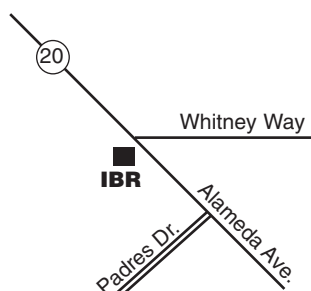
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