

**Discours du Consul général de France à Boston, Valéry Freland,
Remise de décorations à trois vétérans
Jeudi 10 mars - Chelsea**

Dear veterans,
Dear friends,

It is a great privilege for me to be with you this morning on this very special occasion, as we have gathered here today to honor three American veterans who fought during World War II.

Dear veterans, thank you all for being with us in Chelsea this morning, along with your family and your friends who have joined you to express their support and admiration.

Today, we pay tribute to three American heroes. Their struggle and efforts occurred at an extremely hard and dark time in both French and European history. By celebrating their courage this morning, both the French Republic and the people of France remember the American soldiers who helped them recover their freedom, their pride and their honor.

Today, we also remember that the longstanding French-American friendship is bound in blood and that from Yorktown and Lafayette to the battlefields of World War I and to the beaches of Normandy, our two countries have always stood shoulder to shoulder to defend and uphold our shared values of freedom and democracy, fraternity and tolerance.

Our celebration today takes on a particularly symbolic significance, as our two countries have had, once again this year, to confront mankind at its worst. At a time when the common values, for which we have always stood together, united, are being attacked, I do believe that it is of extreme importance that we further strengthen the bond uniting the people of France to the American people.

The year 2015 has indeed been a terrible and saddening year. But what you, veterans, through the remarkable strength and courage that you have displayed, and what the people of the United States of America, our oldest ally, through their undivided show of support in the wake of the 2015 Paris Attacks, remind us of today is that, even in the darkest of times, there still seems to

be a glimmer of light. The people of France and the American people have never been closer for many decades. And this gives us hope.

Dear veterans,

You are true heroes and will be our heroes forever. We, French, will never forget what you did to restore our freedom. And today, we also remember the ultimate sacrifice of so many of your comrades who now rest on French soil. They will remain forever in our hearts.

In recognition of your heroic actions and extraordinary accomplishments, the President of the French Republic, François Hollande, nominated you to the Legion of Honor, with the rank of Chevalier. I will now bestow this distinguished award upon you, one after the other, in order of seniority.

Napoleon Bonaparte created the Legion of Honor in 1802 to reward extraordinary accomplishments and outstanding services rendered to France. It is France's highest distinction and one of the most coveted in the world.

1. Private First Class James Baker

You joined the U.S. Army on October 20, 1942, and were assigned to the 325th Fighter Control Squadron as a heavy truck driver.

You were first stationed in Italy and in August 1944 you were shipped on a boat to Southern France, where you took part in the Operation Dragoon, the crucial Southern France Campaign that enabled the Allies first to take control of the port cities of Toulon and Marseille, and then to connect with Patton's American forces near Dijon by the month of September 1944.

On August 15, 1944, you landed on Delta Beach where you participated in the decisive Battle of Saint-Tropez. You were there wounded by a gunshot in the left arm while fighting the Germans.

Private First Class James Baker, for your participation in these battles and campaigns, you were awarded the European-African-Middle-Eastern Campaign Medal with 1 bronze service star, the American Campaign Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.

2. Private First Class Leo Defilippo

You joined the U.S. Army on November 2, 1941, and were assigned to the 749th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion as a power plant operator.

You participated in the Northern France, Rhineland and Central Europe campaigns. You served overseas for three years, going upward, country through country, behind the front line. Specifically, you were assigned to the Headquarters & Headquarters Detachment of your Battalion and, in particular, during the Northern France campaign, although not on the front line, you were always ready for combat if needed.

Private First Class Leo Defilippo, for your participation in these campaigns, you were awarded the European-African-Middle-Eastern Campaign Medal with 3 bronze service stars.

3. Sergeant Michael Maglio

You joined the U.S. Army on November 16, 1942, and were assigned to the 28th Infantry Division as a cook.

You participated in the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe campaigns. In particular, you served in 1944 as a cook for the Regional Headquarters Company during the Battle of Normandy, one of the key battles of World War II, and during the Northern France Campaign, travelling throughout the region and following the front-line battles. At the end of your service, you had obtained the rank of technician fourth grade.

Sergeant Michael Maglio, for your participation in these campaigns, you were awarded the Good Conduct Medal with 4 bronze service stars.

1. Private First Class James Baker

Au nom du Président de la République, nous vous remettons les insignes de Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur.

2. Private First Class Leo Defilippo

Au nom du Président de la République, nous vous remettons les insignes de Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur.

3. Sergeant Michael Maglio

Au nom du Président de la République, nous vous remettons les insignes de Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur.