

Remarks delivered by Rob Cox at the dedication of the J.W. Cox Range Control Center
May 31, 2000

Great Friends of WSMA ---

I want to express our gratitude for this honor bestowed on our family. I don't know that Jim Cox deserves it any more than any other rancher on this range. There were some 200 families moved off their ranches and they have paid a great price for this range to become Army land and, as I understand it, the largest overland test range in the free world. We are mighty proud of it, but it was a sad day when we all got the notice that we had to leave and move off the range.

My folks were a little bit luckier than most because they got to keep their home and a little bit of country back toward the mountain. But, my dad never blamed the Army, per se. They were not the ones who ran us off this range. They were provided with this range and told this is where you will test your missiles.

And, some of the best friends we have ever had have been made right here on this post.

And, I want to give a lot of credit and pay tribute to the other ranchers that were displaced. They paid two prices. They were the ones who settled this country. The government encouraged them to come out here, take up homesteads, work the land, and occupy it before some other neighboring country occupied it and took possession. That's the way the world works... or it did in the old days. Then the government later took it away from them. It was a bitter pill to swallow. But everybody in the old world must pay a price. Some pay a heavier price than others.

And when I look back in history I think of the framers of our constitution who pledged their lives, their fortunes and sacred honor. You don't pay a bigger price than that.

During all of our wars, we have had great heroes ... great soldiers that have served and got no credit. We owe them a great vote of gratitude.

A few things come to mind ... landing on the beaches in France during World War II. Those guys paid a terrible price. The guys who were in the Philippines paid as big a price as anybody who ever lived. The five Sullivan boys who were lost on a ship at sea ... out of one family. Now that was a terrible price.

Now, we all have a price to pay. This is the price the ranchers paid.

I have to give you a little insight into a rancher's mentality. Now, I'm going to use ranchers and cowboys intermittently. And, to me they are the same. They have a strange mentality. Anybody who would engage in a business that yields a two percent profit when they were borrowing 10 percent to operate on, just doesn't compute. But, we are just dumb enough to try it.

Our friend... I shouldn't mention this ... our friend Ted Turner has three ranches in New Mexico. He readily admits that every one of them loses him a million dollars a year. Shoot, that's nothing to being married to that... Female.

Back to the rancher mentality, I'm going to give you an illustration of how the rancher cowboy thinks. Now this is a large coin ... a German coin and the denomination is one billion marks. And, it's worthless. That's what you get for losing the war.

In this pocket, I've got a little stone. Nothing but a common, creek bed stone. It's smooth but it's etched with a rattlesnake. It was given to me by a very dear friend and therein lies its value. This [stone] is much more valuable to me than this [coin]. Oh, this [coin] is a good conversation piece. This [stone] was given to me freely. This [coin] was, you might say, liberated.

My theme of my little talk is paying the price. And I want to end this by talking about the price paid by our veterans of Bataan and Corregidor. Those men went over there ill prepared to fight a war that this nation was not prepared to fight. They sacrificed themselves, but they bought us time. Their hierarchy moved down to Australia... And it took them four years to work back. But it gave us time to retool and mobilize this country where we could fight a war. We are not going to have four years next time. It may well be a matter of hours and we want somebody to keep us prepared and we want you folks to do that.

We all have to pay the price and the price of liberty is pretty high.

Thank you.