# Cornell University – WWII Remembrance Garden Dedication May 27, 2017 Memorial Day

# Introduction by Lt Col David A. Barber, C.O. Army ROTC

# Honored Guests Ladies and Gentlemen

# Welcome to this important event where we can dedicate, and remember, those who served, and those who lost their lives in WW2 through this small piece of campus.

# Through our attendance and dedication, we are not forgetting the true value of this day and its meaning. We honor the tens of thousands of Cornellians who have answered their nation's call to service and more than 800 who paid the ultimate sacrifice since this wonderful University was founded. In this special location on campus, we stand here to remember the 20,000 Cornellians who served and the 500 Cornellians who gave their lives for freedom and to end the tyranny that plagued Europe and the Pacific over 70 years ago.

# In my short 19 years of serving I have personally lost a number of close friends and colleagues. I choose not to honor their death, but to remember their lives and cherish our forever bonds and friendships. Each would want me not to dwell on their sacrifices, but to enjoy this day with family, enjoy the freedoms they helped guarantee. Each would want me to continue their struggle and fight, to ensure that our children, or their children, won't have to make the same sacrifices that we made.

# Remarks by Frank H. T. Rhodes, President: 1977 to 1995

I was 12 when Hitler invaded Poland on Sept. the first 1939 and on Sept the third we when to church as a family as usual and when we returned we listened to Neville Chamberlain on the BBC radio say that a state of war existed with Germany. Chamberlain had travelled to Germany the year before and signed the so called Munich agreement that conceded the German speaking part of Sudetenland to Germany and he came back and waved a piece of paper and said “that I think it is peace in our time”. And that was just a year before. But Germany invaded Poland on September the first and on Sept the third Britain declared war on Germany followed by France, New Zealand and Australia and a day later British planes bombed German ships in the English Channel and Bristol?? Lenin planes made a reconnaissance flight over the German coast so that very early on there was action. Chamberlain had a cabinet of just eight members and of those Churchill came back as first Lord of the Admiralty. The Chief of Naval Operations sent a message to the fleet saying “Winnie is back” and that was his job for the first part of the war. He became Prime Minister on May the 10th, 1940 after the Labor Party and the Liberal Party had refused to serve under Chamberlain any longer.

And then I remember very vividly, public buildings were sand=bagged all over the country and all road signs were taken down, presumably so that if Germany invaded the country they wouldn’t know where they were, which was an optimistic view. Car headlights had to be dimmed with special inserts and food was rationed very early in the war. Petrol/gas was rationed early in September. So things changed pretty markedly for civilians living at home. Everyone was issued a gas mask in a little cardboard box which you carried with a string on your shoulder, and gas mask drills at school, and factories and everywhere else were common features. The government provided two kinds of shelters that you could buy. One was a corrugated iron shelter that you dug into your garden. I cannot imagine going out into that in the middle of winter but I suppose some people did. The other one was a thing called the Morrison Shelter. This was a very substantial structure of cast iron that you bolted together inside your home. It was probably nine feet long and probably five feet wide and it had steel mesh on the bottom, steel slats on the bottom, and steel mesh on the sides that you would put on when you were inside so you could get five adults in there and that was where we slept for a while. But that was the period of the “Phoney War” and women and children were evacuated all over the country and then gradually when nothing happened they crept back. But that turned out to be premature of course, and a lot happened.

On May the 10th 1940, the day that Churchill replaced Chamberlain, Germany invaded France and Belgium and Holland and by the end of that month Holland and Belgium had surrendered and France was driven back, and the Petain government set up in Vichy. The British and French troops fighting with them were left completely outflanked by the French retreat and surrender. And so a small armada of ships, you probably remember, and pleasure boats and small river cruisers took off and evacuated the British expeditionary force from Dunkirk. They evacuated 226,000 British troops and another 110,000 French troops. Food rationing was introduced in the UK and I remember very vividly the allowances, they were small and lasted 14 years because the Labor government that followed Churchill’s government thought it was a good thing for people to have equal shares. I’ve written down the amounts: two ounces of butter a week, four ounces of bacon, two ounces of cheese, and one fresh egg. You had ration books that were checked off. There were not supermarkets then so you had to go to different stores for different items. A grocery store, a green grocery store, a butcher store, and so on. But those were the items. The thing that most affected civilians at that time in the years of the war was the Blitz and that was a really hard experience. In London in September of 1940, 5,300 tons of bombs were dropped and in the period of two to three weeks 40,000 people died. And almost every major city in Britain was bombed. In Coventry for example, which was about 15 miles from where we lived, in one night in November 1940, 4,300 homes were destroyed, and 550 people died and there were 200 separate fires. But that wasn’t all… all the major cities and buildings suffered that kind of bombing.

There wasn’t much you could do about it. You taped the windows with masking tape. You got into these Morrison Shelters or whatever else you had. But really there was no protection against that. They did have barrage balloons and they had the early version of radar which helped greatly in the interception of enemy planes. There was recruitment for a local volunteer force earlier on called the Local Defense Volunteers (LDV). But people quickly translated that into “Look Duck and Vanish”. And so it was changed to “Home Guard” and that was widely recruited from civilians and armed when it looked as though invasion was likely. And then in 1941 of course Germany invaded Russia and became bogged down in a stalemate that would continue. That was something that changed the whole course of the war. The blitz continued against Britain and lease lend was introduced and that my goodness was a godsend ….that really changed things.

And then you remember the day of infamy when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. And that really was something that persuaded people in Britain that after two years of being alone things would change. Hard times still lay ahead but with the US in there was now clear hope that the outcome was assured. So for an elderly, elderly man a long time ago those are the things I remember.  
  
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[Home](http://president.cornell.edu/)Frank H. T. Rhodes

Frank H. T. Rhodes

President: 1977 to 1995 | [Inauguration: 1977](http://president.cornell.edu/the-presidency/inaugurations/#rhodes)

[](http://president.cornell.edu/files/2015/02/frank-rhodes-210x280-19lx1sr.jpg)When Frank H. T. Rhodes retired as president of Cornell University on June 30, 1995, he was the longest-serving Ivy League president and a national leader as an advocate for education and research. He played a significant role in the development of national science policy under several presidents.

Rhodes increased diversity at Cornell among students and faculty. Minorities as a percentage of the student body grew from 8 percent in 1977 to 28 percent in 1994. The number of women and minorities on the faculty more than doubled in the same time. Evaluations of teaching and advising of students were added to tenure standards.

Research funding more than tripled during Rhodes’s tenure, from $88 million in 1977 to more than $300 million in 1993. Asian studies, supercomputing, biotechnology, and nanofabrication were four major initiatives.

A successful $1.5 billion capital campaign was completed, due largely to Rhodes’s tireless efforts to strengthen support for financial aid, educational programs, and libraries. Rhodes ended deficit spending and left the university with a balanced budget. New buildings and facilities that were built during Rhodes’s tenure include the supercomputing center, the Statler teaching hotel, the biotechnology building, the center for theater arts, the nanofabrication laboratory, athletic facilities, and others.

Born in Warwickshire, England, on October 29, 1926, Rhodes is a graduate of the University of Birmingham, England, from which he holds four degrees. He is a former Fulbright scholar and Fulbright distinguished fellow, a National Science Foundation senior visiting research fellow, a life fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, a visiting fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and an honorary fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge, and the University of Wales.

Rhodes was appointed by President Ronald Reagan as a member of the National Science Board, of which he is a former chairman, and by President George H.W. Bush as a member of the President’s Educational Policy Advisory Committee. He has served as chairman of the governing boards of the American Council on Education, the American Association of Universities, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He also has served as a trustee of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and was a member of the board of directors of General Electric from 1984 to 2002.

Rhodes has published widely in the fields of geology, paleontology, evolution, the history of science, and education. His books include*Language of the Earth*, *Fossils*, *Geology, Evolution and The Evolution of Life, The Creation of the Future: the Role of the American University and, most recently, Earth: A Tenant’s Manual.*

Rhodes was chairman of the 1987 National Commission on Minority Participation in education and American Life that produced the report, “One-Third of a Nation.” The honorary co-chairs of the Commission were Presidents Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter. He was the co-chair, with Donald E. Petersen, former chairman of the Ford Motor Company, that produced the report, “American Potential: The Human Dimension,” and was co-chair, with Gary Tooker, chairman of Motorola, of the Council on Competitiveness 1995 report on research and development. He was also a member of the Association of Governing Boards’ 1996 Commission on Renewing the Academic Presidency. He was a member of the Board of King Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST).

Rhodes is a principal of The Advisory Group at Huron Consulting and a member of the Board of Overseers of Koç University in Turkey. He is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences’ Commission on the Future of the Research University.

Rhodes holds 35 honorary degrees and is the recipient of the Bigsby Medal of the Geological Society, the Justin Morrill Award, the Higher Education Leadership Award, the Clark Kerr Medal of the University of California-Berkeley, and the Ian Campbell Medal of the American Geological Institute. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is a member and past president of the American Philosophical Society.

Rhodes is president emeritus and professor emeritus of geological sciences at Cornell. At commencement ceremonies in 1995, the Cornell Board of Trustees announced that the Cornell Theory Center building was renamed Frank H.T. Rhodes Hall.

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Cc: President emeritus Frank H.T. Rhodes

Families of Veterans Honored

Attendees May 29, 2017 Dedication of Remembrance Garden for World War II Veterans

Cornell University Veterans