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SPEECH DELIVERED BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GEORGE GRUNERT, COMMANDING GENERAL, EASTERN DEFENSE COMMAND, AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE MEXICAN ORDER OF THE AZTEC EAGLE TO COMMISSIONER P. L. ANDERSON, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, AT THE MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM, 12 FEBRUARY 1945.

Judge Quin, Consul General Calderon, Commissioner Anderson, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I am glad that I was able to arrange my affairs so as to be here to participate in honoring Mr. P. L. Anderson and at the same time to meet and fraternize with the distinguished representatives from Mexico and the leading citizens of this great State of Texas. Whilst I am in this vicinity, I shall visit various military installations on the border and pay my respects to the Generals of Division of the Mexican Military Districts adjacent to our Southern Land Frontier.

It is indeed an honor and a pleasure to be present on this occasion, so significant of the ever-increasing goodwill, understanding, and friendliness between those two great sister republics of North America -- the United Mexican States and the United States of America.

Prior to January first of this year, that part of the Mexican-American boundary from Arizona to the Gulf of Mexico, and the Gulf Coastal Frontier as far east as Florida, were a part of the Southern Defense Command. With the ever-lessening danger of an attack against this area, thanks to the efficacy of our Navy and to the staunch support of our Mexican Allies on our southern flank, a separate command for the defense of this area was deemed unnecessary by the War Department and on January first of this year the remaining functions of the Southern Defense Command were absorbed by the Eastern Defense Command.

Thus, as Commanding General of the Eastern Defense Command, it is now my duty and, I may add, my very great pleasure, to carry on the cordial relations so firmly established between the Mexican Military Commanders and former commanders of the Southern Defense Command. Since the distance of my headquarters in New York from this area and the extent of my command are so great, I regret that I shall not always be so available to carry on personally the close contact with my Mexican confreres as was my predecessor, the former commander of the Southern Defense Command, Major General Henry C. Pratt, whose headquarters were conveniently located in San Antonio. However, to assure that our relations will not suffer thereby, I shall maintain a section of my headquarters at Fort Sam Houston under charge of Brigadier General Raymond E. McQuillin, and continue the Southern Land Frontier Headquarters at Laredo, Texas, under the command of Colonel Marion Carson. These officers will help me maintain close relations with adjacent military commands in Mexico.

Today, for the first time, it has been my privilege to meet a number of the Mexican military commanders and distinguished Mexican civilian officials with whom I shall be associated in the future. I wish to assure them of the fullest cooperation on my part and on the part of my staff and subordinate commanders. I desire to express to them the ever-growing admiration of this country for her Mexican ally who has so whole-heartedly entered the struggle for the survival of democracy.

Today, thousands of American soldiers of Mexican origin are, as members of the Armed Forces of the United States, courageously fighting the common enemy on most of the battle fronts of the world. Great numbers of these gallant Mexican fighting men have been reported on our casualty lists. Hundreds have made the supreme sacrifice, giving their lives for us and for democracy.

Under the able leadership of General Lazaro Cardenas, Secretary of National Defense in Mexico, a modern and well-equipped Army has been developed which is prepared to assume its share of responsibility for the defense of this hemisphere. A Mexican Air Fighter Squadron, now training in this country, will soon receive its Battle Standard from the hands of General Francisco Urquiza, Sub-Secretary of Mexican National Defense.

The contribution to our war effort made by thousands of Mexican workers who have been generously permitted by the Mexican Government to come to our assistance is of great value. Many of our air fields, our railroads, and our factories have, in many instances, been kept at top efficiency because of the availability of this assistance from Mexico.

Mexico has played another significant part in the war, too, by furnishing needed critical raw materials to our industry, which have greatly facilitated the production of vital military supplies and equipment.

Mexico, through her brilliant Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ezequiel Padilla, has played a leading and especially important role in consolidating the Latin American Republics on the side of the democracies.

On our Southern Land Frontier there is, today, a feeling of security and of friendly and helpful contact with our Mexican neighbors. Thanks to the location and protection of the Mexican garrisons along the Rio Grande, most of the United States troops formerly stationed there have been released for combat service overseas, and our many training establishments, located along that frontier, carry on their missions in complete security. Thus, too, has our Mexican ally contributed materially to the War Effort of the United States.

The present war, with its threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere, has bound our two nations in a close comradeship of arms. That this comradeship will carry over into the days of peace to come should be the aim of every thoughtful citizen of our two countries. May the recognition made today of a citizen of the United States by the Republic of Mexico be an added stimulus toward that end.

Tonight, by decree of General Avila Camacho, President of Mexico, a distinguished citizen of Texas and an honored official of the City of San Antonio, Commissioner P. L. Anderson, will have conferred upon him the "Order of the Aztec Eagle". I am informed that this high decoration was created by the Mexican Government for the purpose of publicly expressing the appreciation of the Republic to outstanding citizens of foreign countries whose accomplishments in the field of international relations have proven beneficial to the welfare of Mexico and to the cause of democracy generally. This award is conferred upon Mr. Anderson in recognition of the splendid work he has done in the promotion of better understanding and

closer friendship between the people of the United Mexican States and the United States of America.

For the men and women of the Armed Services to receive recognition for outstanding services in the form of the award of medals is an understood and routine procedure, but for a civilian to be recognized for meritorious conduct and exceptional services by another Nation -- "Brother, That's Something".

The Army and my command in particular are much interested and gratified that Mr. Anderson is receiving this award, not only because he is an outstanding citizen of Texas and San Antonio but because of his valuable contributions to the maintenance of goodwill and the furtherance of understanding between our people and those of Mexico. This is of distinct and definite value to the military, particularly so since so many of our citizens here in the southwest are of Mexican origin.

So, I heartily congratulate Mr. Anderson and thank our sister republic for her courtesy and considerate generosity. If more civilians would emulate Mr. Anderson and if more medals were awarded to civilians on both sides of the Border in recognition of such service, it would promote friendship and understanding and thus materially assist our respective Armies.

Thank you.

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