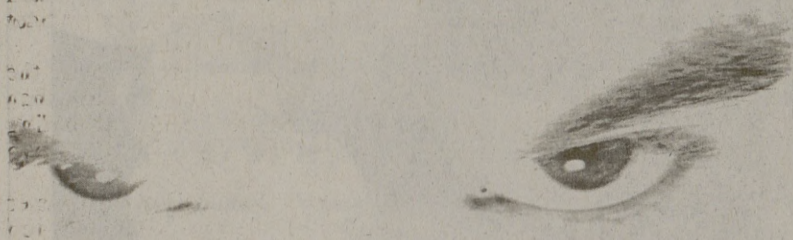


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McVeigh execution date set for May

The Oklahoma City bomber will be first federal execution in 28 years

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Federal officials set a May 16 execution date Tuesday for Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted of murder and conspiracy for the bombing that killed 168 people in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons said it had notified McVeigh of the decision.

The 32-year-old McVeigh, who is on death row at a federal prison in Terre Haute, Ind., has said he does not want any more appeals, but he has reserved the right to seek executive clemency.

He let the deadline for resuming his appeals expire Thursday and prison officials

started planning for his lethal injection.

U.S. Bureau of Prisons spokesman Dan Dunne said officials initially delayed selecting an execution date until they could plan the event, including meeting the needs of the victims' relatives and survivors of the blast.

The April 19, 1995, bombing was the worst act of terrorism ever committed on U.S. soil.

The federal government has not put a prisoner to death since March 15, 1963, when it executed Victor Feguer for murder and kidnapping.

McVeigh's attorney, Nathan Chambers, said

McVeigh has made no decision on whether to seek clemency.

"He can be forgiven but he must pay his restitution."

— Betty Robins
 A.P. Murrah Federal Building employee

"I don't know yet," he said. "That's something Mr. McVeigh has under consideration."

He said McVeigh has 30 days to file a petition for clemency with the Justice Department's Office of Par-

don Attorney, which will make a recommendation to the president.

Betty Robins, who was working in the building at the time of the bombing, said the execution date was fine with her.

"My feeling are as long as it is not the anniversary date, it will be fine," she said from the memorial at the bombing site, where she works as a volunteer. "Since the anniversary will be past almost a month, it will be fine."

"He can be forgiven but he must pay restitution, and his death will be that restitution. But you can never pay for that kind of crime. But this is close as it can

comes. I just wish he would tell people why before he dies and what he wanted to accomplish."

McVeigh's father, retired Pendleton, N.Y., factory worker William McVeigh, has said that his son explained his decision to the family. He told The Buffalo News, "I guess his feeling is, he knows he's going to die — it might as well be sooner than later."

Others speculated McVeigh wants to become a martyr for anti-government causes, or wants to mock the U.S. government with his petition for clemency, knowing how long it has been since federal authorities put someone to death.

Clinton awards two posthumous Medals of Honor to Roosevelt and Civil War vet

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former president best known for his charge up San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War and a former slave whose courage during the Civil War was ignored by the Army for almost a century got posthumous Medals of Honor from President Clinton.



CLINTON

"May we continue to live up to the ideals for which both Andrew Jackson Smith and Theodore Roosevelt risked their lives," Clinton said Tuesday as he presented the medals to the Smith and Roosevelt families in a ceremony in the Roosevelt Room of the White House.

Before a painting of Theodore Roosevelt in battle gear and on horseback, Clinton described in glowing terms the former president who, as a lieutenant colonel in the Spanish-American War, led his men up a Cuban hill and "changed the course of the battle and the Spanish-American War," Clinton said.

"TR was a larger-than-life figure who gave our nation a larger-than-life vision of our place in the world," Clinton said. "Part of that vision was

formed on San Juan Hill."

Roosevelt openly campaigned for the Medal of Honor, America's highest military decoration, for his performance under fire on July 1, 1898. The action became known as the Battle of San Juan Hill.

Roosevelt led his regiment of volunteers, the Rough Riders, into action alongside Army regulars up Kettle Hill, one of two hills comprising San Juan Heights. The Rough Riders then advanced up San Juan Hill with as few as four men but arrived after regulars had taken it.

The Roosevelt family will donate the award back to the White House. Roosevelt's 58-year-old great-grandson, Tweed Roosevelt, said in accepting the award. It will be displayed in the Roosevelt Room along with Theodore Roosevelt's Nobel Peace Prize, which he was awarded in 1906 for his role in settling the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 with a treaty signed Sept. 5, 1905, in Portsmouth, N.H.

"We think it will serve as a wonderful icon for future presidents, when they take foreign dignitaries or other people into the Roosevelt Room for private luncheons, to be able to turn and point to the mantelpiece and say, 'This is what we as a country stand for: the Medal of Hon-

or and the Nobel Peace Prize.' Peace and honor," Tweed Roosevelt said.

Alongside the Roosevelt family was the family of Cpl. Andrew Jackson Smith of the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, a former slave who joined the Union Army during the Civil War. The 55th Massachusetts was the sister regiment to the 54th Massachu-

100 men, but they never lost their colors because Corporal Smith carried them through the battle, exposing himself as the lead target," Clinton said.

Although Smith was first nominated in 1916, he was rejected for the Medal of Honor even though 80 other soldiers who saved their unit's colors were awarded the honor after the Civil War. One was father of World War II hero Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

"Sometimes it takes this country a while, but we nearly always get it right in the end," Clinton told the Smith family. "I am proud that we finally got the facts and that for you and your brave forebear, we are finally making things right."

Smith's family thanked Clinton for finally coming through for their ancestor.

His 93-year-old daughter, Caruth Smith Washington, came to the White House to see her father's dream of winning the Medal of Honor finally come true. "I am very proud to be his daughter," she told reporters after the ceremony.

"Only in America can the sons of a slave and the daughters of a slave receive the same honor at the time that a president's sons and daughters receive theirs," said Andrew Bowman, Smith's 65-year-old grandson.

"Sometimes it takes this country a while, but we nearly always get it right in the end."

— Bill Clinton
 U.S. president

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