

Memorial Day Reflections

Once a year, on this solemn day, we take time from our busy lives to commemorate thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who gave their lives in defense of our nation and our way of life. One day of remembrance is a small thing to give to those who sacrificed so much.

I am no longer a private citizen, or I would not presume to address others on such a day. I aim to represent the valorous men of our military, both the living and the dead, in the halls of Congress, and to do justice to their memory. I seek the mantle of responsibility to assist and provide for those who defend our freedoms. Just as it is their duty to serve, it is my duty to speak.

I am not a veteran, and I cannot presume to understand the scars war has left on soldiers who have lost fellow comrades in arms. But I can listen, and humbly know that my own weak voice cannot lend any strength to the resounding chorus of our honored dead. I can try to appreciate the depth of their devotion to those left behind, and to do right by all.

These words may be hard to some, but as Patrick Henry said, "For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst and provide for it."

Memorial Day is not only about the past, but about the future. It is up to us to make sure the noble legacy of our armed forces, and the people who served in them, is not cheapened through time.

But a cheapened legacy is what we see.

We see it whenever our leaders betray liberty for security.

We see it when our country spends far more than can be sustained, even for defense.

We see it when the principles that built the Republic are not maintained, but exploited for short term gain; when the rule of law is sacrificed in the name of emergency.

It is preposterous to assume that the very same people who gave their lives for their families and buddies would accept losing the wealth and liberty of their own posterity today. It is absurd to think they would accept arbitrarily or capriciously going to war. But that is what many leaders ask of us in our beloved America today.

The best way to honor the dead is to not let their sacrifice be in vain. On this Memorial Day let us ask ourselves: Who, among those who have given everything, fought for fewer freedoms, massive debt and endless war?

Then let us resolve to set things right again.