



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Winner

Senator Winner offers his thoughts on the observance of Memorial Day.

GEORGE WINNER May 22, 2009

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Americans have observed Memorial Day for over a century, since the time of the Civil War.

It remains a grounding, powerful, and solemn occasion when citizens gather to honor our veterans, to recall their sacrifices, and to remember that American soldiers still serve to protect freedom and preserve peace throughout the world.

This weekend Americans will gather in small cemeteries. We will come together in city parks and town squares and village greens in poignant remembrance.

Sacrifice is the truth that we remember and honor on Memorial Day. We pause in our daily lives to salute the brave men and women -- America's veterans -- who fought the wars and gave their lives to make the United States the greatest nation on the face of the earth.

So it is with great respect and reverence that we gather on Memorial Day to bow our heads in tribute to America's fallen soldiers. Soldiers, all of them, who died to preserve, in the words of President Harry Truman, "the eternal dignity of man."

We pause, also, to salute the over 3 million veterans living in New York State today, and the over 30 million across the nation.

And we pause to salute the brave men and women who, on this very day, are serving this country, keeping America strong and the world safer. They remain shining examples of courage and honor.

Let's hope that our young people will be instilled with the spirit to keep America great, to believe that the American way is a good, decent, worthwhile way.

In the end, perhaps, this spirit is the greatest justice for all of the missions flown, for all of the foxholes dug, for the hills taken, and the battles fought.

Our soldiers, American soldiers, made the ultimate sacrifice to keep America free, so that she could lead the way to a freer world.

Our soldiers sacrificed to keep alive America's promise, so that people throughout the world could look to her for inspiration.

Our soldiers sacrificed to keep America strong, so that other nations could draw courage from her strength.

It is my great privilege to carry on the essential observance of Memorial Day.

On June 6, 1984, in remarks commemorating the 40th Anniversary of D-Day, President Ronald Reagan said, "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we may always be free."

For as long as we remember and keep our soldiers alive in our hearts, we will stand as we do -- free in a land of opportunity and promise.