



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' ~ for the week of May 25, 2020 ~ 'We will honor Memorial Day'

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 25, 2020

| ISSUE: **VETERANS DAY**

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Because of our veterans, we can look into the eyes of the young people in our lives this Memorial Day, the faces of the future, and have faith that they, too, will be instilled with the spirit to keep America strong, to keep believing that the American way is a good, decent, worthwhile way.

Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature, as well as on legislative actions, local initiatives, state programs and policies, and more. Stop back every Monday for Senator O'Mara's latest column "From the Capitol..."

This week, **"We will honor Memorial Day"**

May 25, 2020--From among the countless words spoken or written across the generations to capture the essence of Memorial Day, I somehow always return to former President Ronald Reagan, on June 6, 1984, in remarks commemorating the 40th Anniversary of D-Day at the Omaha Beach Memorial Cemetery.

On that day, President Reagan proclaimed, "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we may always be free."

Particularly striking are those repeated words: We will.

Indeed, even on this Memorial Day when the COVID-19 response changes our lives and our rituals, we will continue to honor this observance. Public health as priority number one restricts large public gatherings and requires ongoing social distancing and other safety practices, yet it cannot deter our ability, in our own ways and in our individual lives, to remember and pay tribute.

We will continue to raise the American Flag.

We will proudly recognize New York State as the “Birthplace of Memorial Day,” which our nation has observed since the time of the Civil War. It is a time to reflect on the greatness of a nation built on the sacrifices of the men and women who fought and died for the underlying dreams of their homeland. In remembering, we will always reaffirm our pride in this nation's military men and women.

Of course, we will always turn enduring thoughts and prayers to the young soldiers, the heroes, who have been recently lost. We will honor our wounded warriors. We will support the men and women serving in harm's way at this very moment -- shining examples of bravery and eternal honor.

We will salute all New York State veterans and the millions more across the nation. I have been privileged to pay tribute to the service of outstanding local veterans through the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame, into which more than 400 veterans have been inducted since 2005. This includes the following area veterans whom I have had the privilege to induct since 2011: Philip C. Smith of Schuyler County; J. Arthur “Archie” Kieffer, Chemung County; former Painted Post Mayor Roswell L. “Roz” Crozier, Jr.; Anthony J. “Tony” Specchio, Sr., Schuyler County; P. Earle Gleason, Yates County; Warren A. Thompson, Steuben County; and Paul C. “Digger” Vendetti, Chemung County.

The Senate's online Veterans' Hall of Fame can be viewed [HERE](#).

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In the end, perhaps this is the greatest justice for all of the missions flown, the foxholes dug, the hills taken, and the battles fought. Our soldiers -- American soldiers -- have made and will continue to make the ultimate sacrifice to keep America free, so that she can lead the way to a more free world.

The sacrifices of our soldiers will keep alive America's promise, so that people throughout the world will look to her for inspiration.

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

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.

It may be different in so many ways at this moment of observance -- but the spirit of this salute will endure and remain strong for the future.