

By Congressman David Price at Hillcrest Cemetery, Cary, NC -

I am glad to be in Cary again for what has become, for me and for increasing numbers of our fellow citizens, an annual tradition of joining American Legion Post 67 and the Auxiliary for this Memorial Day observance. For twenty years Cary has remembered on this occasion the men and women who have sacrificed - - in the case of 1.2 million, given the ultimate sacrifice -- so that the nation Lincoln called "the last, best hope of earth" might endure.

Of all the emotions we feel on this day, one of the strongest is gratitude. The occasion brings to mind a story my pastor recounted years ago. It was set in the 19th century, when the Potato Famine sent many Irish people to America looking for a better life. On one immigrant ship, a young boy slipped on board as a stowaway. At mid-sea, the ship hit an iceberg and began to sink, but it seemed that everyone might be able to get safely into lifeboats. Being hidden as a stowaway, the boy was late in realizing what had happened, and he came running down the deck just as the captain was about to step into the last lifeboat. In the tradition of the sea, the captain stepped back and put the youngster in his place. As the lifeboat pushed off, the captain said to him, "Never forget what has been done for you."

In the New World, the boy grew up to become a remarkable success and was extremely generous with his time and money. Whenever someone would ask him the secret of his life, he would always tell the story of that sea captain. He said, "When I get discouraged or feel worthless, I see that captain standing on the deck in my place, and I hear him saying, 'Never forget what has been done for you.' That vision has never left me, and it gives my life meaning and courage."

Now that is a dramatic story, but doesn't it reflect the situation of each of us? If we could look into the faces of those we honor today, who gave the supreme sacrifice on our behalf, they too might admonish: "Never forget what has been done for you." We must not forget, and in remembering, we find strength and inspiration to give back to our community and to our country, to become a blessing to others as we have been blessed.

So Memorial Day means gratitude, gratitude to those who have given so much. From this gratitude flows determination to live up to our country's obligation to those who have served and to do our part to help our country achieve its promise of "liberty and justice for all." Let us

Remarks at Memorial Day Observance

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resolve that we shall never forget what has been done for us.

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