

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

"Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid," President Harry S. Truman said as World War II ended. "They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices." These words, now inscribed on the National World War II Memorial in Washington, are a fitting text for this Memorial Day and for this 19th community observance organized by Cary American Legion Post 67 and the Auxiliary.

Earlier this year, in preparing some reflections for the North Carolina Holocaust Commemoration, I was struck by how prominent a place, in both our national and religious life, is occupied by occasions of solemn remembrance. Of course we also share memories of triumph and joy, epitomized perhaps by Independence Day, but Memorial Day is always close by – a reminder that freedom and independence are not free, that our country and the ideals it seeks to embody have required service and sacrifice in every generation and, in the case of 1.1 million valiant men and women, the ultimate sacrifice.

It is perhaps on these occasions of solemn remembrance, remembering and honoring struggle and sacrifice, that we realize the ties that bind us most profoundly. "Rejoice with those who rejoice," our faith teaches us, and "weep with those who weep." Today we remember with gratitude what has been done for us, and we "weep with those who weep," recognizing our solidarity with those families and loved ones who feel it most acutely when a soldier does not return home or returns with grievous wounds of war. And as we remember and come together as a community, we must also rededicate ourselves – to fulfill our country's obligation to those who have served and their families, and to carry forward their work of keeping our country strong and secure and redeeming its promise.