

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

From earliest recorded history, people have cherished memory and have erected memorials to help them remember great people and great events. In the scriptures, Joshua commanded the Israelites to commemorate a miracle:

Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder...so that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do these stones mean to you?' Then you shall tell them that... when (the ark) crossed over the Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever. (Joshua 4:5-7)

Today we are gathered among these stones, many of them commemorating people who died defending this country and its ideals, and we are gathered on a day set aside as a memorial to the 1.1 million patriots who have given their lives so that we might be free. We are once again grateful to Post 67 and the auxiliary for organizing this observance for the entire community.

"What do those stones mean to you?" The children still ask, and we ask one another. This memorial occasion reminds us how blessed we are to live in a land that aspires to "liberty and justice for all" and that has been a beacon of hope for oppressed people all over the world.

We are reminded that democracy is a work in progress and that we all have an obligation to give something back to our community and our country, to make them all that they can be. We know that freedom is not free and that our country has always depended on men and women for whom, as Admiral Nimitz said of the heroes of Iwo Jima, "uncommon valor (has been) a common virtue."

We pledge to show our gratitude with more than words, to meet our obligations to those who are serving and have served. This is a major focus of the current Congress, as it should be: to strengthen health care for both active duty personnel and for Veterans, and to enact a modernized GI bill that will do for today's Veterans what the original GI bill did for the World War II generation.

Remarks on Memorial Day

May 26, 2008

"What do these stones mean to you?" They mean gratitude to those who have given so much. They mean determination to live up to our country's obligations to those who have answered the call. And they mean that we can not, must not, shall not ever forget what has been done for us.