

Each year on Memorial Day we join together to honor the memory of American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coastguardsmen who made the ultimate sacrifice in an effort to preserve the freedoms, opportunities and optimism that make America such a beacon of hope and inspiration for the world.

Beyond the commemorative parks and monuments of the Washington D.C. area, in gardens of stone across our Nation, in memorial cemeteries in Europe and the Pacific, and on unmarked foreign battlefields - lie the heroes of America. They came from every state and every walk of life. Each different except for basic shared values: a sense for fairness and decency, and the view that each citizen of our world deserves the opportunity to live and prosper without fear or repression. This common vision gave birth to our Country and continues to inspire this and future generations in America and across the globe.

Freedom isn't free. From Bunker Hill to Guadalcanal; during campaigns in Korea, Vietnam, Panama, the Balkans, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere, America's sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, husbands and wives have paid the price for liberty in blood and with their lives. Those who have lived long remember those who did not. The words on the Army 2nd Infantry Division World War II memorial in Burma, which honors the many American Soldiers who never returned from Burmese jungles and fields, still apply. It reads, "When you go home, tell them of us and say that for your tomorrow, we gave our today."

This Memorial Day finds our Nation at war against Terrorism. It is a war we did not seek, but one we will decisively win. This war is more personal than previous conflicts. Our enemy does not represent a nation, only evil. This enemy, has killed thousands of our Citizens, many on our own shore, and seeks to destroy the open, pluralistic, democratic society that makes America unique - and a force that they fear greatly. They will not succeed and they are being defeated as we speak by the courage, selfless commitment and tenacious, self-confident, determined efforts of America's Armed Forces, both military and civilian, in every AOR. These men and women accept the inherent risks of this work for the sake of their comrades, their Nation, their children and the generations to come; to ensure that religious totalitarianism will not prevail and that our open, values-based society is preserved.

We pause today, more than any other day, to remember and mourn the "Soldiers" and Civilians of all services who put aside things our society normally considers important to sacrifice all on our behalf. We take the time to say a public "thank-you" through commemorative wreath laying, monuments and memorial ceremonies. And, to reflect on the remarkable environment and benefits which their service has given us. With over 350,000 military personnel deployed today in over 120 countries worldwide in the Global War on Terrorism, most in Southwest Asia, Memorial Day 2004 has special relevance and significance - their sacrifice is more than a distant memory. Most of us have friends and comrades - to hear folks tell it, invariably

the "best and brightest" - who didn't make it back. We honor them today and every day by remembering and celebrating their lives, and reflecting on what they have given us as fellow Americans.

At the Nolan Building, INSCOM headquarters, we find ourselves surrounded by monuments. They honor those within our intelligence ranks who made the supreme sacrifice during conflict and missions around the world. A stone at the base of a tree recalls the sacrifice of an officer lost on a sensitive mission in Germany during the sometimes lethal "Cold War." A gray granite monument topped by the statue of a Soldier is dedicated to Army Security Agency Soldiers lost during operations in Korea, the Dominican Republic and Vietnam. A dark marble obelisk on the grounds commemorates the sacrifice of INSCOM Soldiers since that time - the inscribed names include an officer lost to terrorist attack in the Pan Am 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, and Soldiers lost during operations in Colombia.

This year we're updating the INSCOM monument to commemorate the sacrifice of 10 Soldiers who lost their lives during a wide range of hazardous missions in the service of America over the past years. Three of the names belong to Soldiers who lost their lives in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom: Sgt. D. Travis Friedrich, 325th MI Battalion, Waterbury, Conn., Staff Sgt. Richard S. Eaton, 323rd MI Battalion, Fort Meade, Md., and Sgt. First Class Christopher R. Willoughby, 221st MI Battalion, Fort Gillem, Ga. Each deployed with INSCOM's 513th MI

Brigade. Each performed their duties with great distinction in the face of a determined, ruthless enemy. Each contributed directly and significantly to keeping this Nation secure and making the world a safer, better place.

For over 220 years, our military has served as the Nation's shield against terror and tyranny – that has never been more true than today. We honor the lives, contributions and sacrifices which the men, women and civilians within our military have made on our behalf. We will never forget them. We will also remember their families and keep them in our hearts, thoughts and prayers, this day and every day.

As a final thought, the death and injury of our Soldiers and Civilians is always tragic. We usually think of those losses in terms of military operations. But, it is equally possible, and just as heartbreaking, to lose our people to accidents that should be prevented. As we move into summer I ask that you take special care to avoid accidents. Remember, we are an Army at war and INSCOM needs each of you. Be safe and make it home, both here and abroad.

God bless our Soldiers, Civilians and families. God bless America!

JFK