

Memorial Day Message – Rochester, WI
May 28, 2012

Good afternoon Congressman Ryan, elected official, distinguish guest, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls – but most importantly all our veterans here today. It’s an honor and privilege to speak at Rochester Memorial Day Observance. For over one hundred and forty-six years the Village of Rochester has been honoring our brave men and women who have served their military and the many who have gave their lives for the freedom of this great nation.

I thank the good Lord for all of us here today. I also thank God for giving me the strength, wisdom, understanding and knowledge to serve our proud veterans in Racine County -- as your County Veteran Service Officer.

I would like to take a moment to recognize my predecessor Mr. Dick Bayer who served as Racine County Veterans Service Officer from June 2006 until his untimely passing on June 1, 2011. Dick was passionate about helping veterans; his legacy was to never leave a veteran or their family behind. Lets bow our heads for a moment of silent prayer. Thank you.

Racine County is rich in military heritage and our public is proud of the sacrifices our veterans have made for the state of Wisconsin and this great Nation.

Our Americans have fought in many wars starting from the American Revolutionary War of 1775 to 1783 in which we

fought for our Independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain.

What Memorial Day mean to me as a Veteran?

Memorial Day is a United States federal holiday observed on the last Monday of May. Formerly known as **Decoration Day**, it commemorates U.S. soldiers who died while serving in the military. First enacted to honor Union soldiers of the American Civil War it was extended after World War 1 to honor Americans who died in all wars. "

The first known observance of Memorial Day can be traced back to Charleston, South Carolina in 1865; freedmen celebrated at the Washington Race Course, today the location of Hampton Park. Decoration Day now referred to as Memorial Day, at the graveyard of 257 Union soldiers and labeled the gravesite "Martyrs of the Race Course" on May 1, 1865.

Freedom that we have today and what our children will have tomorrow comes at a very high price -- death.

The freedom that we enjoy today comes because our **military men and women** have given their service to this country and some have made the ultimate sacrifice.

I have experienced what it is like to face the dangers of war first hand. I have served with many who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Today I remember not only the military men and women who have died, but their families.

Ask yourself what will you do to honor these brave men or women who gave their lives to fight for the freedom you enjoy?

What will you do to honor those who are actively serving right now?

Military veterans represent every background and every walk of life; they represent the rich military heritage of this great nation and the multitude of cultures that make the United States the strongest nation on earth.

Our debt to these heroes can never be repaid but our gratitude and respect must live forever --- On Memorial Day you and I have the opportunity to thank the many men and women who have worn the uniform that symbolizes freedom around the world.

I would like to thank all veterans here today your service and sacrifices. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed and you will never be forgotten.

For some of you older veterans; like Mr. Moss a WWII Veteran sitting in his wheel chair in the crowd. We younger veterans thank you personally for paving the road for us. Today we stand on your shoulders.

Thank you and may God continue to bless you, your families and the United States of America.

HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY!!!!!!