

## Memorial Day - Grassley comments

Written by Grassley Press  
Tuesday, 28 May 2013 13:45

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Saturday, May 25, 2013

**Senator Chuck Grassley will attend the Memorial Day Parade and speak at the Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday in Aplington.** The parade begins at 10 a.m. at the Amvets Post 102 Building in the 900 block of Patriot Street in Aplington. The ceremony begins at 10:30 a.m. in Pleasant View Cemetery.

**Senator Grassley is an original co-sponsor of the *Veterans Access to Care Act* introduced Thursday by Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.**

The legislation would help to improve veterans' medical facilities by allowing facilities with a need for additional health care professionals to apply to be designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area. Once designated, these facilities have access to National Health Service Corps, which provides service-obligated scholarships and loan forgiveness to health professional students who pledge to practice for at least two years in a Health Professional Shortage Area. The bill also would require the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a process for veterans' facilities to qualify as Health Professional Shortage Areas.

**Below is a statement from Senator Grassley about Memorial Day**, thanking those who have served and remembering those who have given their lives for freedom.

**Memorial Day – Reflecting on the True Price of Freedom by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley**

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Memorial Day really is a community-oriented holiday. The first observances of what we now call Memorial Day were spontaneous expressions of gratitude and remembrance on the part of Civil War veterans for their fallen comrades, organized by veterans groups in local communities. Only once it became an established tradition did state legislatures and Congress recognize the day as an official holiday. The tradition remains for local organizations to recognize Memorial Day with moving and heartfelt observances.

Memorial Day is a time for families and neighbors to gather in remembrance and in tribute to those individuals from their community who gave their lives for our country. This allows us to remember them not as strangers, but as sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers.

When you first arrive at a national cemetery, you are struck by the sea of identical white headstones spreading across green fields. When you draw closer, you see the name of an individual and their home state, with a date often indicating a young life taken too soon. That's when it hits home that these are not anonymous soldiers, but individual Americans who left behind a hole in the lives of their loved ones.

I've made it my practice to honor each Iowa soldier that has died in Iraq and Afghanistan with a personal tribute in *The Congressional Record*. In the process of doing that, I have learned a little bit about each of these brave Iowans. I've learned about their hobbies, their sense of humor, and the families they left behind. I've also noticed that time after time, the family members say the same thing; that their loved one was proud to serve their country, knew the risks, and accepted them. You can't help but be deeply touched by that kind of selflessness.

I'm proud that we have so many such people in Iowa. I think it's in close-knit communities like we have in Iowa where the value of service to our fellow Americans is most ingrained. Neighbors help neighbors and people really care about each other's lives. When a soldier from a tight-knit community goes off to war, he knows the people he's fighting for by name. And, if he doesn't come back, his loss is felt very personally in his home town. We have a solemn duty to honor those who have fallen in service to our country, not in the abstract, but as family members, friends, and neighbors. Remembering the individual lives of our fallen heroes is deeply humbling and profoundly American.

It's also important to remember what they were fighting for. Our nation is unique in human history in that it was founded not on the basis of a common ethnic identity or loyalty to a

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monarch, but on certain enduring principles. Those principles are best articulated in the simple but eloquent words of the Declaration of Independence – *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”*

Our patriot forefathers concluded that these principles were worth fighting for and took up arms. The odds were not great that groups of local militias and a hastily cobbled together national army would defeat the largest and best training military at the time. Nevertheless, our forefathers risked everything because they believed so deeply in the fundamental truths just mentioned.

Our founding principles are as true today as they have always been and generations of Americans have given their lives to protect that unique and precious gift of liberty. It's impossible to describe in words the debt of gratitude we owe these fallen heroes, but Memorial Day is a reminder for each of us to reflect on the true price of our freedom. God bless all those who defend our freedom.