

Secretary of the Navy Memorial Day Message 2008

Since 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery, Americans have set aside a day in May to remember those who have died in our Nation's service. Those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of the United States have earned our gratitude, and a day of honor in their remembrance.

Our liberties were hard-won on the field of battle. The signers of our Declaration of Independence pledged to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. They understood that nations must fight for their freedom-and that that freedom,'once achieved, must be defended. On this day of solemn tribute to those who have taken their eternal reward while defending their fellow citizens, let us resolve to be worthy of their sacrifice, and let us honor those who have sacrificed so much to preserve the blessings of liberty that we claim as our birthright.

The Honorable Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy.