

Scouts, Cub Scouts, Sea Scout Cadets, Navy, Marine, and Army personnel are responsible for the success of this memorial celebration.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Visalia Avenue of the Flags Memorial Day Ceremony. I invite my colleagues to join me in remembering the fallen veterans of Visalia, and in thanking the Visalia community for their continued dedication to the memory of past veterans.

MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2002

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, in 1868 Major General John A. Logan established a "Decoration Day" on May 30 as a day of remembrance for the dead of the Civil War. General Logan ordered his posts to decorate the local cemeteries "with the choicest flowers of springtime" to honor the thousands killed during those four terrible years. Today, some 2,847,200 veterans lie in honor in our national military cemeteries. Since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom last year, 22 Americans killed in action in the Afghan theater have joined them.

Freedom's latest hero was a member of the National Guard's 19th Special Forces Unit, Sgt. Gene Arden Vance Jr., 38, of Morgantown, W. Va., who was killed in action on May 19. Citizen-soldiers have always been the foundation of America's military strength, and Sergeant Vance's loss is a sad reminder that your neighbors who serve in the National Guard and Reserves play a unique role in our armed forces.

Today, the men and women of the National Guard and Reserves serve America within and beyond our borders. Just this week National Guard soldiers left the Jacksonville Airport, successfully concluding their airport security mission in Florida. Since the September attack on our country the National Guard provided security at 19 airports in Florida for over nine months and did a magnificent job protecting our airports and other vital installations. Their professionalism, dedication and discipline reassured Americans and contributed mightily to repelling the economic attack the terrorists perpetrated against our country.

General Logan's original Decoration Day proclamation called us to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, "We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance . . . Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic." I urge you to take this charge to heart and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country by stopping what you are doing at 3:00 pm on Memorial Day to participate in the National Moment of Remembrance, but don't stop there.

This year, once Memorial Day has passed, consider what the world might look like if not for the service of generations of Americans. Take time throughout the rest of the year to reach out to the members of our armed services who are fighting freedom's newest enemies. Tell them the citizens of our state and nation are grateful for their service, and thank them and their families for the daily sacrifices that allow them to serve.

POEM BY LT. COL. JOHN McCRAE
ON MEMORIAL DAY

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2002

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, on Memorial Day, the nation will honor, remember and thank those who gave their lives in the service of the nation. I want to commend to my colleagues' attention the well-known poem "In Flanders Field" by Lt. Col. John McCrae, as a reminder of the sacrifices made by service men and women in preserving our freedoms and democracy.

IN FLANDERS FIELD

By Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, MD
(1872-1918)

In Flanders Field the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short two days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders field.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders field.

REGARDING THE 27TH INFANTRY DIVISION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2002

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, as we approach Memorial Day, I would like to take this opportunity to clear the air regarding an unwarranted blemish cast upon a unit of the New York National Guard—a unit that enjoys an otherwise illustrious history dating all the way back to the Revolutionary War.

For 56 years, the U.S. Army's 27th Infantry Division, a unit of the New York National Guard, has carried this black mark—as a result of a thoughtless outburst with little basis in fact—by the Marine General commanding the Saipan Invasion in 1944. This situation was further compounded when Time Magazine published the General's remarks without seeking to corroborate their veracity.

In July 1944, the 27th Infantry Division, commanded by Army General Ralph Corbett Smith, was ordered to relieve a division of Marines engaged in fierce fighting on the mountainous island of Saipan in the western Pacific.

The combined force of National Guardsmen and Marines would be led by the top-ranking ground officer on Saipan, commanding the Fifth Amphibious Corps, Marine Lt. Gen. Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith. This proved to be a questionable decision.

The dissimilar training of the Army and Marine Corps units did not prepare them to achieve the expectations of Lt. Gen. Smith and he overreacted. Marine Lt. Gen. Holland Smith relieved Army Gen. Ralph Smith of his

command when Lt. Gen. Smith mistakenly charged that Gen. Ralph Smith was incapable of motivating his troops in battle that he said resulted in losses to the Marines.

Officers are relieved in wars for various reasons, and the matter usually remains private within the military. The Smith versus Smith controversy, however, spread from the remote island in the Pacific all the way to the American media and the Pentagon.

Army generals in the Pacific angrily accused Lt. Gen. Holland Smith of bias. While the Army Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall, did not believe Lt. Gen. Holland Smith's allegations, he ordered that no public response be made—in an effort to preserve interservice cooperation. In fact, Marshall was eventually able to smooth things over with his naval counterpart. Gen. Ralph Smith, for his part, was later exonerated by an Army board of inquiry and enjoyed a successful military and diplomatic career.

At the time, however, the American press was quick to choose sides, and Time-Life allied with the Marines. Time Magazine printed an article that maligned the heroism and credibility of the 27th Infantry Division. Marine recruits were told that the Army "wouldn't fight" on Saipan. Lt. Gen. Holland Smith's version of events was repeated without question in numerous histories and memoirs.

Following a complete investigation, the Lt. General's superior, Admiral Chester Nimitz, announced in an official memorandum that the 27th Division had been harshly treated and much maligned. Admiral Nimitz concluded that there was a definite need to remove the stigma attached to the division, by the Navy Department in Washington, by publicly stating their "continued confidence in the courage and battle efficiency of the 27th Division."

At the conclusion of his extensively researched book on the Saipan battle, published in 1986, historian Harry A. Gailey noted that "the slurs cast upon the officers and the men of the 27th Division then and later by [General] H.M. Smith in his articles and books were totally unwarranted and unconscionable. Those who gave a part of themselves to gain victory in the conquest of this important island bastion deserved better—from their commander and their nation."

As more and more of the brave veterans who placed themselves in harm's way for America pass to their final resting places, it is not only appropriate but incumbent on us to correct any miscarriage of judgment and restore any lack of recognition which they, the men of the 27th, truly have earned and deserve. Mr. Speaker, let us, here, in this chamber, take a necessary first step and salute those veterans of the 27th Infantry Division—three of whom were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor: Capt. Benjamin Salomon and Troy, New York, natives Col. William O'Brien and Sgt. Thomas Baker—in the glorious spirit that has characterized so many in our military, who did what was asked of them with courage and determination, without regard for their own safety, and asking for no special reward but the thanks of their citizens.

Mr. Speaker, had it not been for the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States military through the years, we would not have the privilege of bragging about how we live in the freest and most open democracy on the face of the earth. Freedom is not free. We have paid a tremendous price for