



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator LaValle Honors Our Veterans

KENNETH P. LAVALLE May 19, 2009



As the Memorial Day weekend approaches, it is our custom and privilege to honor those who have sacrificed their lives in defense of our country's freedoms. In today's changing society, it is important that this tradition be preserved and that the contributions of these courageous men and women remain a strong influence on the lives of future generations of Americans who will shape our nation's destiny.

This national day of observance originated in the south, after the Civil War, when families began decorating the graves of soldiers with spring flowers. In 1868, after learning of the charity and thoughtfulness of these southern families, then Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, General John A. Logan, suggested May 30 be dedicated "for the purpose of strewing flowers on the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country."

Since that time, America has stood strong, brave, and free in the face of many serious challenges. This Memorial Day, as we reflect on our country's past and recall the sacrifices made for our freedom, we must also remember our troops serving overseas. We must support their efforts for however long they are called upon to serve.

Our solemn commitment to maintain our nation's principle of liberty for all must be shared by everyone. We must keep the faith of those we honor on this occasion by holding fast to the wise and decent sense of sovereignty left to us by the great founders of our nation and hold onto our hopes and dreams for the future.

As we celebrate this Memorial Day, we stand together in our belief that the supreme sacrifice made by the men and women we honor will never be in vain and that the freedoms for which they fought will always be ours to enjoy.

I believe we are still the hope of all nations. We still hold the beacon of liberty to all people of the world. This is our legacy -- let us cherish it always.