

“What Would Our Fallen Heroes Ask Of Us?”

Memorial Day – May 27, 2013 at Chapin Park, New Hartford, CT

Thank you everyone for joining us here today as we pay tribute to all those who have died in the service and protection of our great nation. We remember them here today, around our state, and throughout our great nation.

We memorialize them here on this plaque, one at Town Hall, and many like it, in towns across our state and decorate ours with a wreath as a tribute to their service. The names here inscribed read as a history lesson of our town. Some of the names may sound familiar and some lost to the annals of time, but there is a common thread that ties all of these names together and that of course is courage. We honor that courage today!

We also pay tribute to our lost heroes at the Tomb of the Unknowns, our national memorial at Arlington, commissioned in 1921 to remember an unknown World War I soldier from France. The inscription on the tomb reads “Here Rests In Honored Glory An American Soldier Known But To God”. Expanded through the years, our country is thankful for the freedom we enjoy every day.

We salute all of our lost heroes here today, with our local Veterans and members of the American Legion present, and take time from our day, to give thanks to all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. We remember their names, we thank them for their service and we honor them for their sacrifice. We also remember their families and we mourn with them for their loss.

As we remember all our lost servicemen and women, we recognize that through their sacrifice, a new nation was created, nurtured, and defended from tyranny throughout the years. The children here today may not know the details of their sacrifice, those lessons are the burden we adults carry, a small portion of debt that we pay for the liberty provided by those lost in service to these United States.

What they created, our new America, was built with their bare, often bloodied hands, carried on their aching backs, largely across foreign lands nearly a century ago, that might have hills and valleys that look somewhat like New Hartford filled with families not unlike our neighbors. They, like us, seek the simplicity of a beautiful small town. A place to live and work, raise our families, and practice our faith without governmental interference. The times have changed, but our goals remain the same. The peace and freedom we enjoy here today, a beautiful Memorial Day perfect for a picnic lunch was indeed a costly endeavor, one that now comes with a balance due.

For those who gave their lives in service to our nation, frequently ask for very little in return. In composing my thoughts this weekend, I asked myself what these fallen heroes would have asked of us in return for their service. After much thought, I concluded that they would have asked for just three things. First and foremost they would ask that we honor their memory. Today we take great care in honoring the service of those lost in battle.

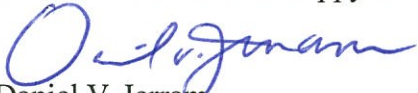
Second that would ask that their deaths be not in vain. From today onward, we keep vigil to their loss, in an ever changing, uneven world, that our actions, and those of our government, consistently pursue the course of freedom and to continue to work for peace, justice and prosperity for all. We can and will keep the dream of freedom alive not just here, but around the world. For their sacrifice will not be in vain.

And lastly, they would ask that we care for their fellow brothers and sisters in arms. For those that have served or continue to stand guard for our nation we give unending thanks. For those on foreign shores, we hope and pray for a safe a speedy return home. And for those who have been wounded in service, we pray that you find care and healing. You have done your work and when you return home, we will do ours and care for you.

I thank you all for joining us here today! I hope you'll join me in viewing the monument after the ceremony is complete. I want to thank our Veterans and members the American Legion for once again organizing our ceremony today. I also want to thank the scouts for coming out and helping with the ceremony. I ask that you join me in a round of applause to thank them. Thank you all!

For those of you with some additional time this morning, please feel free to join us at Town Hill Memorial Park on Hoppen Road at 11:00am where we will continue our tribute to all those who served our country by ringing our Memorial Bell.

Please have a safe and happy holiday weekend!



Daniel V. Jerram
First Selectman