

MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL

As we mark Memorial Day 2010, we remain a nation at war. There is a terrible cost to war, and that cost became apparent once again last month when we learned that the number of Americans killed in battle in Afghanistan since we first deployed there nearly eight years ago had reached 1,000.

To me, it is not the number that stood out – rather, it is the names behind the number, the names of individuals taken suddenly and tragically, too young and too soon. Let us always be mindful that every one of them is missed by family and friends and mourned by their loved ones, and that their loss can never be fully explained and must never be minimized.

Our nation has a solemn duty to remember our honored dead, to comfort those who still grieve for them, and to pledge that we will do all we can to assure that they did not die in vain. They gave their lives while defending freedom and fighting against terror and tyranny. We can honor their legacy by completing what they began, and continuing to commit our own lives to a cause higher than ourselves.

This Memorial Day, please set aside some time to observe the true reasons for the holiday by remembering those who gave the lives for the sake of your freedom. I also ask that you please be aware of your own safety and the safety of those around you. Memorial Day is the traditional start of summer, a season when accidents tend to increase in number. So be smart and be safe, and stay accident-free throughout the Memorial Day weekend, the summer season, and the rest of the year.

May you and your family have a very happy and safe Memorial Day – and may we always honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom.