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A Memorial Day Message for Hope and Peace

“Oh beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!” ~ *America The Beautiful*

“America stands as a shining city upon a hill whose beacon light guides freedom-loving people everywhere” because of the devotion and tireless effort of men and women of our Armed Forces.¹ From generation to generation, our country’s servicemen and women bear a burden and make sacrifices many of us will never know. On Memorial Day, we pause to honor those patriots who have borne the highest cost and made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our republic.

Our nation’s history is replete with stories of men and women in uniform who personified courage and humility when we needed them most -- by stepping into harm’s way on battlefields in distant lands, by defining the greatest generation in our finest hour, and by rushing into burning towers during the single-most deadly attack on our nation’s soil. They were ordinary citizens who believed so deeply in our country that they gave their last full measure of devotion to safeguard our freedom and liberty.

We owe them all a debt of gratitude that we can never repay. But we can honor their sacrifice by caring for the families who gave us their mothers and fathers, and sons and daughters; by standing with their brothers and sisters who continue to stand watch over our freedom and democracy; and by continuing to hold true to those principles on which our country was founded.

Our country must never forget the fallen servicemen and women whose sacrifice we honor on Memorial Day. With the same abiding faith and commitment with which they served our country, let us rededicate ourselves to that founding principle that, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all [people] are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”² Let us continue to march on “from sea to shining sea.”³

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1 President Ronald Reagan.

2 *The Declaration of Independence.*

3 *America The Beautiful.*