

Speaker Ryan: Remarks honoring the fallen at the Rochester, WI Memorial Day service

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ROCHESTER, WI—House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) spoke today at the 152nd Memorial Day Service in Rochester, Wisconsin. His remarks, as prepared, are below:

“This, to me, is small-town tradition—small-town patriotism—at its finest.

“Think about how, before this—before a local telegrapher organized a small ceremony to honor his younger brother, who died for the Union—this really hadn’t been done before in America.

“Think about how, before America—before our Founders conceived a government by the people, based on a vision of liberty and justice for all—that idea had never been tried before in the world.

“It is an idea so inspiring, so animating that generations have given their lives to preserve it.

“They met those gravest moments—on the beaches, in the muck and the jungle, through the fire—they met them so honestly and courageously.

“They loved their country.

“This is why we come here, year after year—not because any law or ordinance

requires it.

"We gather here out of a deep love of country, and a shared recognition that the blessings of freedom come at a dear cost.

"Memorial Day is such a profound statement of our patriotism.

"It ties simple ritual to ultimate sacrifice.

"It ties our daily lives to the greater things.

"It ties our darkest hours to the torch of liberty.

"There are, I think, at least three things each of us can do in our own way to honor Memorial Day.

"The first is, remember the fallen by honoring the living.

"Many of these men and women laid down their lives to protect their comrades. Many died thinking about their loved ones back home, maybe holding a picture of them, praying they would be okay.

"We should think about what each of us can do to take care of the heroes who live on: our veterans, our wounded warriors, our Gold Star families. God bless them all.

"The second thing is, we should really think about what each of us can do to rekindle and renew this beautiful American Idea—these principles of liberty and self-determination—so that we can pass it on to our children, just as we will pass on this great tradition itself.

"The third thing we can do is think about the service members from our communities who wear the uniform today.

"I have had no greater privilege on your behalf than spending time with them, wherever they are stationed in the world.

"They are truly the best of us.

"After September 11th, I began to carry around a list of young men from this area who died in Iraq and Afghanistan, sons of Racine, Rock, Kenosha, and Walworth

counties.

“In closing, I would like to read their names and observe a brief moment of silence:

Private First Class Sean Schneider
U.S. Army
Janesville

Specialist Justin Linden
U.S. Army
Clinton

Private First Class Andrew Halverson
U.S. Marine Corps
Muscodia

Lance Corporal Daniel Wyatt
U.S. Marine Corps
Caledonia

Sergeant First Class Donald Eacho
U.S. Army
Black Creek

Specialist Eric Poelman
U.S. Army
Racine

Lance Corporal Ryan Nass
U.S. Marine Corps
Franklin

Staff Sergeant Nathan Vacho
U.S. Army
Janesville

Private First Class Eric Clark
U.S. Army
Pleasant Prairie

Private Evan Bixler
U.S. Army
Racine

Corporal Keith Nurnberg
U.S. Army
Genoa City

Captain Rhett Schiller
U.S. Army
Waterford

Private First Class Timothy Hanson
U.S. Army
Kenosha

Staff Sergeant Christopher Frost
U.S. Air Force
Waukesha

Corporal Richard Nelson
U.S. Marine Corps
Racine

Sergeant First Class Brian Naseman
U.S. Army
Racine

Specialist Kevin Graham
U.S. Army
Salem

Lance Corporal Jacob Meinert
U.S. Marine Corps
Fort Atkinson

Specialist Robert Rieckhoff
U.S. Army
Kenosha

Specialist Scott Nagorski
U.S. Army
Greenfield

Private First Class Donnell Hamilton, Jr.
U.S. Army
Kenosha

“God bless America. Thank you.”