

Good morning and thank you. Mike Meade came to me with names of veterans who we have living in town. He wanted my thoughts on who might be willing to speak about Memorial Day. He said, "do you remember the time when we answered an alarm on Village Road. We got out of the car and checked the perimeter of the home. Going back to the radio car, he sees that I only have one boot on. I explained to him that my leg and foot would swell from time to time from my wounds. Then Mike said that's the kind of story that people should know about. That's when I realized he and the others responsible for the parade and service today had no interest in any names that I had in mind. They had someone picked out, and here I am.

And if anyone is interested, now the only time my leg pains me is when my wife Kathy pokes her head in the man cave and tells me to turn off John Wayne and the Green Beret to help her vacuum.

I want to thank those responsible for our parade today. The parade allows us to have our children involved in a very special way and teach them what Memorial Day is about. It is not a celebration! Today we recognize and honor the men and women who have served our country. Not the veterans who are here with us today and certainly not me. This day is for the ones who never returned from the battlefields. It was once said that those who enter our armed services sign a blank check. The cost anything up to and including their lives made payable to our country. The men and women who we recognize, and honor today filled that check out, it reads Paid in Full. In the Gettysburg address President Lincoln said this and it is as true now as it was then. They gave their last full measure of devotion for the cause. That cause – that's our country. The country, that is you and me, the people we are the country. The men and women whose names are chiseled in stone and engraved on monuments in town, cities and villages like ours across the country, they made the ultimate sacrifice. No greater love. They gave their lives for our rights, liberties and freedoms. Rights, liberties and freedoms unmatched anywhere on this planet. Don't you ever forget that. Since the year 1776, 1,355,000 and counting, men and women have given up all their tomorrows for our country. Our heroes are not on the ballfields or in Hollywood. Our heroes are the ones we pause to honor and remember today. Men and women who, if there is any glory in combat at all, they receive it all. They must never be forgotten, for if they are, we will have forgotten our country and they will have died in vain.

Thank you all for listening. God bless you all and God bless America.