

**State Rep. Tom Tangretti
Memorial Day Remarks
Monday, May 31, 2004**

Good morning, and thank you for the honor of offering me the opportunity to speak to you today on this 2004 observance of Memorial Day.

For each of us, Memorial Day conjures different images depending upon our most vivid memories of war.

For many people, those memories were formed by radio broadcasts, newsreel footage and TV news broadcast images while we were safe in our homes.

For others, they were formed in the heat of real battle in places like Europe, Korea, Vietnam and the Middle East.

We are privileged to have veterans from each of those places, and battles in other places, still with us today, a living reminder – and source of important firsthand accounts – of why

sacrificing for our freedoms and our nation is so important.

We join them today to honor their comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice for those causes, and for us.

This Memorial Day marks a milestone in Pennsylvania.

It was 250 years ago, in 1754, when the people who lived and worked this land – which was then the wilderness frontier of early America -- first engaged in battle to protect it.

In that battle – the French and Indian War – Pennsylvanians joined men from the other British colonies to protect their land and their way of life against the French Army.

Of course, many of the Pennsylvanians who fought as foot soldiers in that war would help shape the war against the British for American freedom and independence two decades later.

Since that time, Pennsylvanians, including many men and women from our own local

communities, have fought and fallen in places like Trenton, New Jersey; Vera Cruz, Mexico; Gettysburg, The Marne, The Mekong Delta and Baghdad defending those same ideals.

Last month, I joined my 202 colleagues in the state House of Representatives to unanimously adopt a resolution thanking and honoring United States troops currently serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and in other places in support of those operations.

That resolution expresses not just the appreciation of the 203 members of the House, but of all Pennsylvanians for the men and women who are willing to sacrifice not just their jobs, their time with their families and their youth in defense of us, but also their lives.

These brave men and women continue an honorable tradition that began here in Pennsylvania 250 years ago, and that will continue as long as we value the freedom, independence and way of life they won for us.

It is my hope that in another 250 years, our decedents will still be gathering here in

Pennsylvania, in places like this, and on this date, to join with those who have served and with those on whose behalf they have served to give proper tribute and honor to the men and women who have fallen in service around the world for this country and its people, and who in doing so, paid the ultimate price to preserve our dignity, our prosperity, our freedom, and our way of life.

Thank you.