

## MEMORIAL GROUNDBREAKING

Thank you..... (Gen. Patten.....?)

As Majority Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, ..... it is my distinct honor to be before you today, ..... as we celebrate a day that is long overdue for our veteran community.

Yes, ..... this day has been ..... "a long time coming," but, we must realize that those things most desired ..... are often not easily obtainable.

(PAUSE) Through the tremendous grassroots effort of our entire veteran community, ..... we are gathered here today to break ground for the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial.

For the past 12 years, the vision of this memorial has become embedded in the minds of our veteran community. Through their tremendous fundraising efforts, and their successful communication with the Pennsylvania General Assembly, ..... the construction of this noble memorial has transcended from a vision ..... to reality.

This living memorial will serve as a testament of our Commonwealth's gratitude for all Pennsylvanians who have honorably served our Commonwealth and Country. This memorial will serve as a constant reminder to this generation ..... and the generations which will follow ..... that these Pennsylvania men and women assumed the great burden of keeping our nation free.

In time of war, they heard the call to arms and answered it. Like the Minutemen of George Washington's time, ..... they kept our liberties intact, our flag high, ..... and our Constitution strong.

In times of peace, they gallantly preserved the freedoms for which their veteran brothers and sisters fought hard to secure.

I would like to personally thank each and every one of you here today for the part you played in bringing this befitting tribute into fruition.

This living memorial will serve many purposes.

It will be a place of reflection for the bereaved family of a recently deceased veteran; a place of thought and solitude for the service buddy of a deceased comrade; ..... as well, it will serve as a noble venue for Veterans Day and Memorial Day observance ceremonies. Most importantly though, (PAUSE) this living memorial, through its aesthetic beauty which is embodied in symbolism, ..... will serve as an everlasting tribute to our Commonwealth's veterans, ..... (PAUSE) a tribute which will remind future generations ..... to NEVER forget the great sacrifices of these brave men and women.

Governor Ridge, Adjutant General Lynch ..... (LOOK THEIR WAY) I applaud your strong support of the veteran community's top goal of bringing this memorial into fruition by the start of the new millennium. As well, I applaud the diligent efforts of the various veterans service organizations, and the members of the Pennsylvania Memorial Commission.

Together, ..... "YOU'VE made it happen!"

Thank you and enjoy today's historic ceremony.

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