

This Week in Washington



WITH CONGRESSMAN
JO BONNER

Honoring Our Nation's Fallen Heroes

This week, Americans celebrated Memorial Day, and across the country, people paused to honor the fallen men and women of our armed forces.

Marked on the last Monday in May, Memorial Day is an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the sacrifices of the members of our military men and women – both those currently wearing the uniform and those who have served in the past.

Begun in the wake of the Civil War, family members of the many soldiers slain in that brutal war would lay flowers at their grave sites. Today, 140 years later, Memorial Day ceremonies and celebrations, from parades to prayer services, take place in cities and towns all across the United States.

In the year 2000, Congress passed legislation providing for a "National Moment of Remembrance" to be held at 3 p.m. local time, for all Americans "to voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of Remembrance and Respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to 'Taps.'"

Four years ago, the national World War II memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. was dedicated on Memorial Day. Thousands of veterans from that conflict and their families were in attendance.

In the years since, scores of veterans have made the pilgrimage to Washington to pay tribute to their fallen comrades, and while long overdue, the veterans from the Vietnam War, Korean War, and World War II now all have memorials saluting their service in those conflicts.

Just last week, a group of World War II veterans from south Alabama arrived in Washington – some for the very first time – specifically to visit the World War II memorial.

This past weekend at Arlington National Cemetery, every available member of the 3rd U.S. Infantry placed American flags on the more than 260,000 gravestones and about 7,300 niches at the columbarium.

Regardless of how you and your family chose to recognize this Memorial Day, I hope you will take a moment to remember some of south Alabama's own who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defending liberty around the globe, particularly those who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan:

- PFC Howard Johnson, II, Mobile;

- Sgt. Troy Jenkins, Repton;

- SPC P. J. Bueche, Daphne;

- CWO Philip Johnson, Mobile;

- SPC Christopher Taylor, Daphne;

- Sgt. Foster Harrington, Mobile;

- LCpl. Brad Faircloth, Mobile;

- SPC Steven Ray Givens, Mobile;

" Honoring Our Nation's Fallen Heroes"

- Cpl. Christopher Winchester, Flomaton;

- 1st Sgt. Charles M. King, Mobile;

- Army Spc. Chris Mason, Mobile;

- Army Spc. Robert Matthew McDowell, Mobile;

- Army Staff Sgt. Harrison "Duck" Brown, Prichard;

- Mr. Brett Hunter (KBR), Mobile, and

- Mr. Brian Shrader (Wackenhut), Mobile.

I also ask you to keep Mr. Timothy Bell (KBR), who has been categorized as "missing in action" since 2004, in your thoughts and prayers.

If I have overlooked any native south Alabamians who have lost their lives in the War on Terror, please accept my apologies and my gratitude and that of all Americans for their efforts and sacrifices.

It's also important that we remember to thank the families of those who served in harm's way. Military service is truly a shared sacrifice.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to all these family members - husbands, wives, children, mothers and fathers – for they know – perhaps more than most – what service to country is all about.

May we never forget the struggles, sacrifices, and victories of our men and women in uniform.

House Majority Fails To Fund Troops

Regrettably, Congress adjourned for the Memorial Day recess last week without passing the troop funding bill.

As I mentioned here last week, the House Democratic leaders had a choice to bring to the House floor a clean bill that would provide funding for our troops. However, they chose to send

a bill to the Senate that included \$39 billion in unrelated, domestic spending.

This is a bill widely recognized as not having a realistic chance of becoming law. Instead of staying in Washington and working out a bill with the Senate, the House adjourned.

I find it sadly ironic that while the nation is honoring the work and sacrifices of our military, these brave men and women face the very real threat and uncertainty of no paychecks.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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