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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - This Memorial Day

MAY 25TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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**Congressman Smith Capitol Report
This Memorial Day...
May 24, 2018**

With its unofficial observance dating back to the Civil War, this year's Memorial Day on May 28th, 2018 will represent the 47th year we have set aside the last Monday in May to officially recognize those Military Members lost in service to the United States of America. The freedoms so many American's can, and rightfully should, exercise this Memorial Day would have never been possible without the sacrifice so many of our nation's young, our nation's brave, have made in honor of defending those very freedoms.

It can be hard to know what to do or how to appropriately pay tribute to those lost each Memorial Day. Many of us will make an extra effort that day to say 'thank you' to an active duty Military Member or spend time visiting with Veterans in our community. In our Nation's Capital this week, we passed legislation providing our troops with the largest pay raise in 9 years, and authorized the resources General Mattis says are needed to help rebuild our military and provide them with the equipment, technologies and defenses they need to keep safe. Providing our military with the resources to sustain, repair and rebuild military infrastructure not only does right by our service members, but also helps keep millions of American families safe here and around the globe.

But Memorial Day is about more. It is really about learning the names of the members of our communities who lost their lives defending our freedoms - learning their stories, remembering them and saying a prayer for their lives lost in our defense. You can do this in many ways, historically, on this day, to honor those lost in the Civil War, small towns would decorate with flowers and other items the graves of soldiers fallen in the deadliest war our nation has ever known. At Arlington National Cemetery, for more than 60 years they have paid honor to those lost with the 'Flags-In' tradition by placing miniature U.S. Flags at over 220,000 headstones and niche rows. In recognition of the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War, this Memorial Day, several National Parks in Georgia, Virginia and Maryland will hold a special tribute to lives ended on the battlefield in the Civil War. Many towns in southern Missouri will honor service members who gave the ultimate sacrifice through parades and with our friends and neighbors flying their flags at half-staff till noon.

On Monday, I will spend time honoring the lives of southern Missourians lost during World War I by visiting the Doughboy Statue in Jackson, where seven names of fallen soldiers who were newly identified have been added to the existing statue. I will then participate in the Sikeston Memorial Day Ceremony and finally the Missouri State Veteran's Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony in Bloomfield.

If your Memorial Day traditions typically include family barbecues or a ball game, try to remember why you have the freedom to do those things this weekend, and pay respect to those who have sacrificed for our freedoms. Say a prayer for them, observe a moment of silence, or visit a national cemetery – but most importantly, learn their stories. They are all over the place, up in our towns, in our communities, in our backyards, whose relatives you know and who gave everything for the country they loved, for the country you love and for the country I love. There is no better way to honor them, then by never forgetting them.

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