

Memorial Day Remarks
Richard Debany, Colonel, US Army
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Mr. Polidoro and members of American Legion Post 227, members of the Post's Memorial Day planning committee who made this event possible, fellow residents of Springfield, family members of our fallen heroes, and the Holloway family who travelled both near and far to come...Thank you for attending.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm honored beyond words by your invitation to join you this Memorial Day. Thank you.

Let me begin with special recognition of the Gold Star families in the audience and in our community. We're humbled by your sacrifices and inspired by your resilience.

Today, we recognize the service and sacrifice of over 1.1 million remarkable people who possessed extraordinary courage and sense of duty; unfortunately, amongst those are 30 new names, 30 new stories, 30 new heartbroken families since many of you gathered here last year. From our first nine countrymen who perished shortly after dawn on Wednesday April 19, 1775 bravely facing British muskets and bayonets on Lexington's village common... to 25-year-old Washington National Guardsman, first lieutenant David Bauders, from Seattle Washington who died Friday, May 6 at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq we *must* remember. Let us not forget too that we assemble today as a nation still at war. I pray that next year, we have no new faces to honor.

The men and women to whom we pay tribute today came from across our country, and, indeed, from many other countries. They came from every race and every religion. They were from farms and cities and every imaginable walk of life. Drafted or volunteered, at their decisive moment, each selflessly put themselves in peril to protect our country, their mates, their families, and each of us. They sacrificed themselves so that we might live as they would like to have lived - in freedom and safety with shared values that make this nation great. Our debt *and* our responsibility, is to live our lives not just for ourselves but for all of them.

On plaques to my right are the names of 39 of Springfield's 40 most recent residents who gave their lives to defend our nation and our allies - 30 in World War II, 1 in Korea, and 8 in Vietnam. The names are cast in bronze so that we never forget - even

after time slowly fades our personal memories. By creating these monuments, our community established an indelible record for us and our future generations to remember. Each and every person listed was equally cherished as were those not listed who died in Iraq, World War I, and every war previous. However, there is one name in particular to whom we pay special tribute today – Pvt Frank Orville Holloway.

Frank was born Feb 27, 1931 to Harry and Ann Holloway. The Holloways also had four other kids: Nelson, Regina, Ken, and Shirley. Their family suffered tragedy when Harry passed away when Frank was about 16. In 1949, Ann moved the family from Michigan to Springfield where they settled at 19 Woodland Ave, across the road from what's now ET Richardson Middle School. Frank attended Springfield High and loved cars, in particular, his blue Ford coupe. Intensely handsome, his fun-loving nature was evident in his smile. It wasn't unusual for Shirley's girlfriends to stop by the Holloway house to talk with and to spend time with Frank. School wasn't his passion though; he left in the 11th grade, did some work for a local carpenter, and then, in the spring of 1951, proudly enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. The day he left home, his brother Ken drove him to the recruit reception center in Philadelphia. On the way, Ken recalls that they stopped at a coffee shop at 22nd and Chestnut.

When the Marines sent him to the west coast, he met and fell in love with a California girl, Phyllis 'Jo' Scott. Frank and Jo married in Las Vegas in September of 1952. Only a few weeks later, he was shipped out to the ongoing war that was consuming the Korean peninsula; his bride remained in Anaheim.

Frank was assigned to Baker Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. By the time he arrived, the war had become something of a stalemate, with each side aggressively vying for more territory to gain an advantage in the truce talks in nearby Panmunjom. From outposts, United Nations and Communist forces fought doggedly hill to hill, both defending gained ground and launching localized offensive operations to increase territory.

While in defensive positions just east of Panmunjom, on the evening of January 1, 1953, Captain H. F. Painter, Commander of Baker Company dispatched a platoon size force to assault entrenched Communist Chinese opposing their position. Pvt Frank Holloway was part of that raid. Although geography and environment couldn't have stood in more stark contrast to that of where we stand today, visualize for a moment... The

terrain was rugged, hilly, and rocky with virtually all vegetation destroyed. Although the moon was nearly full that night, it was still low on the eastern horizon when the raid launched at about 10:30 pm. It was cold, bitterly cold. In those freezing temperatures, the raiding party with Pvt Holloway advanced on the enemy's position. A heavy small-arms and automatic weapons fight erupted as they reached their adversary's trench line; close combat ensued.

The Marines didn't have night vision capability, unmanned aerial systems feeding live intelligence into their ears, or close air support. Overall, they didn't have any sort of overmatch advantage; in fact, there was relative tactical parity with the Chinese that fateful night. The fight was intense and bloody and the platoon experienced, as Captain Painter later wrote to Frank's family, "terrific enemy mortar fire". 63 years later on this peaceful day here in Springfield, it's impossible to appreciate the darkness, noise, and confusion of that night but we can all be assured that it was horrible beyond measure. Still, our heroes of Baker Company bravely fought on to accomplish their mission.

The mortar fire concentrated on the assaulting force and made several direct hits on the automatic weapons squad that was laying down essential protective fire for the assaulting men. The Chinese defense ultimately proved too strong and, about 90 minutes after it began, the patrol was forced to break contact and withdraw back to its defensive positions. Pvt Frank Orville Holloway... 21 years old...from 19 Woodland Ave... son... brother... husband... and soon-to-be father... was last seen in the midst of the ferocious fight helping with the evacuation of wounded. In the Army we make a solemn vow to never leave a fallen comrade behind. The Marines of Baker Company indeed felt the same. Before the dawn, to their great personal jeopardy, they retraced their steps nearly back to the enemy trenches to find their missing; unfortunately, they found no sign of Pvt Holloway.

Frank Holloway and the others we remember today were not the only ones to pay a price. Every fallen warrior leaves great sorrow at home. Jo and Frank's mom were notified via telegram of his missing status four days later. Only they and their family could possibly understand their anguish. Little information other than that he was missing after a firefight was known.

With great anticipation, in hopes that Frank survived and was taken prisoner by the Chinese, the Holloway family waited for news. The months wore on and the long-expected armistice was signed and became effective July 27, 1953.

In the meantime, with bitter happiness, nearly seven months after the raid on January 1st, Frank and Jo's son, Frank II., was born. In a time of such grief, seeing her husband's face in that of their son and having a living piece of him to hold in her arms must have warmed Jo's spirit...giving her a reason to go on and face the challenges ahead.

In late summer, the Holloway families in both Pennsylvania and California eagerly awaited the release of the American prisoners of war. On September 12, the Holloways learned that Frank was *not* among the released American POWs. With no evidence that he'd ever been taken prisoner, on January 21, 1954, after over a year of sorrow and frustration laced with hope, the Marine Corps notified Frank's mom and young wife that he was declared deceased.

With amazing resilience, life continued for Jo and little Frank. With Frank senior no doubt looking down upon them with that wonderful smile, Jo married William Findley about three years later. Jo and William raised Frank in Anaheim, he went to college, and he married his wife Patty in October of 1980. Frank and Patty have three daughters: Devon, Danielle, and Maddie. Their oldest, Devon, and her husband Scott have a daughter Avalon.

Although he died on a distant battlefield at the age of 21, Frank Holloway's legacy lives on within his son, his three granddaughters, and, now, his great-granddaughter. Unfortunately his beloved Jo didn't survive to witness, from this life, our honoring of him this day -- she passed away in 1984.

There are many members of the Holloway family with us today; I'd like to introduce a few... Frank Holloway II, his wife Patty, Frank Sr's sister Shirley, his brother Ken and Ken's wife Shirley...We recognize the sacrifice you've made and we're eternally grateful.

To everyone here today, your presence is a tribute to all our lost troops and to their families. It's our way to say 'we remember'. Our remembrance, however, doesn't begin and end today. I challenge all of you to remember Frank and all those that didn't come home when you look upon the beautiful oak trees around our township building. They were planted by our community to honor all our fallen in 1954, the very year Frank was first counted amongst their ranks.

Memorial Day is a day of solemn mourning, but it is also a day of reverent celebration -- a celebration of men and women who dared all, who gave all, so that we might continue to enjoy the freedoms and liberties of this great nation.

In conclusion, I draw your attention to our beautiful flag. Much like the American spirit, she will not stay lowered. At noon, she will rise. She'll rise because we choose not to forget. She'll rise because we still have work to do. She'll rise because our sons, daughters, husbands, wives, parents, neighbors, and countrymen in uniform stand ready today and they will be there tomorrow.

Thank you for allowing me the chance to share this day with you, to remember and honor our fallen brethren...our American soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, coast guardsmen, and civilians who gave us their last full measure of devotion and their lives.

God Bless America and God Bless our Fallen Heroes.

[Please join me in welcoming Frank Holloway to say a few words.]