

# Remembering all who sacrifice for our country

This Memorial Day weekend we will pay special tribute to the many who served and those who died to protect our freedoms with the dedication of a new memorial to World War II veterans on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Memorials like this provide a solemn reminder of past great sacrifices on behalf of our nation, but they also give us an important opportunity to properly thank the brave men and women in uniform fighting every day around the world.



**Betty McCollum**  
U.S. Rep., District 4

On May 29th, I have the honor of joining Minnesota veterans who exemplify the spirit and sacrifice of America's "Greatest Generation" to help dedicate the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. My father served in the Armed Services during World War II, so this dedication is especially meaningful to me. I am also an auxiliary member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

World War II veterans waited too long for this tribute. Six decades ago, sixteen million fought for freedom, and more than 400,000 died. Today, only four million of those Americans are still alive. Millions more supported the war effort from the home front. Every American who lived through World War II was touched by the war in some way. Minnesotans will soon have their own chance to honor veterans and civilians from our state who supported the war effort with a new World War II Memorial on the grounds of the State Capitol in Saint Paul.

Both of these memorials are important to commend those who sacrificed so much for our freedom. That includes more than 325,000 Guard and Reserve troops who have been activated, including more than 4,000 Minnesotans since September 11, 2001. In all, 1.4 million military personnel are serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world. They deserve our full support.

American troops are still sacrificing today and the most recent extension of troop deployments in Iraq is a sober reminder of the

hardships that they and their families are facing. Military personnel and their families deserve fair pay, adequate health care and opportunities for education. Congress and the Bush administration should be doing much more to provide targeted pay raises, expand access to military

health care and increase assistance for the GI bill for our military men and women who are serving our country with bravery and distinction.

When our military personnel return home, they deserve the benefits they were promised when they entered the service. We must restore the \$1.8 billion in veterans health benefits cut from the federal budget. We should address the needs of returning service men and women by expanding opportunities for job training,

higher education, and housing programs. In addition, we must eliminate the tax on disabled veterans that reduces a dollar in retirement benefits for every dollar of disability pay a veteran receives. This disabled veterans tax forces 3,800 Minnesota veterans to lose out on their full retirement pension.

America's veterans were there for us when called to duty, just as our active military is there to answer the call today. It is our turn to honor this commitment to our veterans and troops for their hard work and dedication to this country. As the Veterans of Foreign Wars motto states, we must also honor the fallen by helping the living.

For more information on the memorial, visit the Minnesota Department of Veteran's Affairs Web site at <http://mdva.state.mn.us/PublicWebSite/wwiimemorial.htm>.

For more information about the dedication of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., please visit the American Battle Monuments Commission Web site at [www.wwiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiimemorial.com) or contact Congresswoman McCollum's St. Paul office at 224-9191.