

Gothenburg takes time to remember

Written by Gothenburg Times
Thursday, 31 May 2012 13:54 -



Gothenburg's Memorial Day program began Monday, fittingly, with a moment of silence for a recently passed veteran, Mike Sayer.

Cancer claimed the life of Sayer, the American Legion Post 64 commander, on May 13 but his presence was felt during the program, which he took pains to arrange prior to his death.

Gothenburg senior Morgan Kowalewski gave the address. Her sister Amanda was the master of ceremonies.

The program included the traditional features of an invocation, the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of the National Anthem and the symbolic decoration of a grave. Gothenburg's Honor Guard provided the military gun salute and taps.

Morgan Kowalewski

Good morning my name is Morgan Kowalewski. I am a senior at Gothenburg high school. I am planning on attending Kansas State University and majoring in Veterinary Science.

When thinking about what to say in this address, I can honestly say that, at first, I had no idea what to write. How do I express into words the immense gratitude I feel and the respect I have for the men and women who are so selflessly serving our country? I mean, I'm only a kid in high school and plus, I haven't really had any close association with someone who had served or is currently serving our country.

But then I started thinking about the people I've met in my life thus far, and how from each and

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every one of them, I've learned something. One of these people was my American History teacher, Mr. Haake.

Now he can be pretty intimidating at times, but I did learn one very important thing from him. He taught me that history isn't all about events, dates, and places; it is about the people who were at these events, in those places, on that date and what they did. History really is about people.

Today is the day to honor the people who made history—the brave men and women who gave their lives for our country and those who served and are still serving today.

So who are these people—the ones who are part of our country's history, the ones who made the ultimate sacrifice? They are the men and women, the husbands, mothers, sons and daughters who died for our freedom. Today is the day to honor and remember them.

What about the people who are history in the making? The ones who are currently serving and defending our country? They are the people who carry on the tradition and because of them, our patriotism continues so that there is pride in our country with every generation.

But it is not only because of our soldiers that we are able to enjoy all of this. Like any structure, there has to be support. Behind every soldier there is a loving and caring family. Behind them, a supportive, thankful community.

Every one of us has a part, even if it may not be clear to us. It is because of these people, because of us, that our soldiers are well equipped to do their job to the best of their ability.



What have these men and women given us to be proud of? Too many things to name, but I will try.

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Freedom. It's such a broad term with so much meaning. I was curious as to how Webster defined freedom. While reading all 16 definitions, I stumbled across one, number 15, that caught my attention. Freedom: the right of enjoying all the privileges or special rights of citizenship, membership, etc. Enjoying privileges.

Too often we take our freedom for granted. Too often we forget that our freedom was earned. It comes with a price. That price was and still is being paid for. The little things we take for granted like the freedom to go to school is what makes America beautiful. It is what we are known for.

Protection. Not only do these people defend our freedom, they defend our country. Because of them, we are able to sleep soundly—we are safe.

Finally, pride. We are proud of our soldiers—past and present. They give us a reason to be proud of our country and what we stand for. Because of these things, America is the best place in the world to live.

Today is a day of remembering. It is a day to stop and think about how lucky we really are to have these men and women—some of who are sitting before me today—who realized the importance of defending our America and chose to risk their lives for her. These men and women don't even know me, and yet every day they put themselves in danger to defend me, my country, and my freedom.

It is because of them, and you that I am proud to say I'm an American.

Memorial Day is a day to say thank you and a day to honor. But, these people we are honoring do so much for our country and for us, that our gratitude and honor should not be limited to one day a year. We should remember, honor and thank the people who are making history and giving America the qualities that make her great every day.

So Mr. Haake actually did teach me a lot about the people who make and are making American

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history. I know I don't speak for only myself when I say how much I appreciate what past and present service men and women have done for our country. They have made the United States of America the best place to live in the world.

So to all of the veterans: past, present and future, from the bottom of my heart: Thank You for your service.