

Speaker	Insert Name of Speaker
Event	Insert Name of Event – Memorial Day Observance
Date	Insert time – Insert Day, Date
Location	Insert Address Specific location where the event and speech will take place
Duration	~ 20 minutes
Format	Text
What do you want the speech to achieve?	Encourage Americans to acknowledge and honor the sacrifices of men and women in service to the Nation’s Army on Memorial Day and beyond.
Top Line Messages	It is our responsibility as citizens to recognize and honor our fallen.
Army Communication Objective	Sustain the Army connection with the nation through outreach engagements and other communications.
Topic	Reflecting on the stories of fallen Soldiers
Key Points	• The nameless heroes
	• The extraordinary heroes
	• The people who carry on
	•
Connection with audience	Insert your rapport building story
Audience	Insert specific detail about your audience
People to	Consult with your protocol office to determine appropriate order of

acknowledge	acknowledgements.
Notes	Insert specific detail about the event, weather, technical aspects, speakers who may introduce your speaker.

Remarks by **Insert Name**

Name of event – Memorial Day Observance

Time – Day, Date, 2013

Introduction

The following is an example introduction. It has four elements: acknowledgements, rapport with the audience, topic and subtopic. You can modify the acknowledgements and rapport building to your specific speaker, location and event.

I'd like to thank you for inviting me to join you today during this Memorial Day remembrance.

Let me begin by asking all the Veterans and the Gold Star Families in the audience to please stand. You are each heroes – thank you deeply for your self-less service.

(Applause).

I think those men and women who, so long ago, imagined this holiday we now call Memorial Day, knew what they were doing when they designated this time of year as our time to honor the fallen. It is a time of renewal and strength after a winter of loss and silence. They must have imagined all the flowers in bloom, a million or more representing those lost in battles here and on almost every continent around the globe. They must have imagined the opportunity to tell the stories of the past to the American people who will pass these stories on to the children of tomorrow.

The flowers of the season are beginning to break through hallowed ground and remind us to honor those sleeping the long goodnight beneath it. Ever so resiliently, the tulips and daisies, daffodils and poppies are peaking through the earth and proclaiming with their spectrum of petals and their soft fragrance, that there is hope in the face of hardship and there is life to be remembered where the stem meets the soil. These annual monuments that grow from nothing would not be stopped this year in their mission to announce the day we honor the men and women - sons and daughters - of this Nation, who gave their lives in her defense.

We too must take our cue from these symbols of growth and proclaim today a day to tell the story of a Soldier who is no longer able to smell the scents of spring. Today I want

to spend our time together reflecting on the stories of Soldiers who died for our Nation's cause – some in combat and some after a life, long-lived in uniform. Their stories are the stories of this Nation and they deserve to be heard, remembered and honored on Memorial Day and beyond.

First, before we honor those most extraordinary heroes as is tradition today, let us acknowledge the men and women who died for this country after a life in service to her – people who will not make the pages of history, but who nevertheless require our respect and homage.

Second, I want to highlight two of these most extraordinary citizens.

Finally, we must praise the solemn task of those who carry on after that dreadful knock on the door that bore the worst of all visitors – fate.

1: The nameless heroes

Today we gather at cemeteries all over the country, march in parades in cities big and small from California to Virginia and we watch the annual Memorial Day concert on television. We do these things to honor the loyalty and bravery of our fallen in this noble calling - military service. While this day is typically spent recalling the valor of men and women who died in combat, we must never forget those quiet professionals who answered that noble calling to serve the people of the United States. Their passing didn't make headlines, but their lives and profound sense of duty and patriotism will resonate with the Soldiers they met and trained, the missions they executed with dedication and the families they left behind. It's the crusty drill sergeant who barked orders so the recruits could learn how to handle stress; It's the sergeant who helped a new Soldier mend a troubled marriage; It's the chaplain who listened to and comforted a Warrior who had just lost a battle buddy - these are the nameless heroes, but to their families, who live and die each day without want of recognition - who we are obligated to remember. They die in nursing homes and hospitals everywhere, everyday – the fact that they did not die in battle should not diminish our responsibility as citizens of this great Nation to show our respect for their service. It is not where they died that matters,

it is their life given over to the greater good of the Nation, that defines their legacy. It's the years at-a-time deployed, separated from family, in austere conditions and in unfamiliar lands that makes them our heroes. These men and women too must be honored today and beyond. When is the last time you walked past someone donning a baseball cap bearing the name of a decades-old war or battle? Did you stop and thank them for their service? Did you ask them their story? There is no time but today to know those Veterans who so faithfully guarded our Nation. As you must know, fewer and fewer of the men who survived World War II are still with us. We must seize this day to seek them out and learn their stories; and once learned, share them with the next generation. Resolve today to never let that man in the cap pass you by again. Shake his hand, tell him you appreciate him, let him know you appreciate the years he gave, so that you could be free. It is our responsibility as citizens to pay homage to those who die in service to the Nation but - oh – how much more is our responsibility to pay homage before they pass. It is not a message you are used to hearing on Memorial Day, but it is important to consider, none-the-less.

2: Extraordinary heroes

I will share two stories of these most extraordinary people to wear the Army uniform; ordinary people who knew the price of freedom but wrote the check anyway.

Army chaplain, Captain Emil (A-mill) Kapaun (Cup-pawn) grew up on a farm in Pilsen, Kansas. His first calling was to God. God, he said, called him to military service, so he joined the Army. Kapaun was sent to Korea in 1950 to provide comfort and counsel to the troops as a chaplain during the first months of the Korean War. The Soldiers quickly realized he was so much more than a chaplain. He was their "Soldier-Saint." On All Saints Day his unit came under heavy attack by Chinese forces that, until that time, no one thought would enter into the Korean conflict. The Chinese forces devastated the American lines into the night and on through the next day. Kapaun had the chance to fall back to safety with a portion of his unit, but he chose to stay in the thick of the battle to minister to the dying and aid the wounded. He would brave a barrage of bullets, bounding from foxhole to foxhole to check on "his boys." Over and over he risked his life to retrieve the wounded or the bodies of the fallen. When the wounded were beyond

saving, he gave them spiritual comfort. One Soldier from that battlefield says it was a miracle he's still alive today, but for the actions of Chaplain Kapaun. Despite finally being captured and in the midst of being marched away by a Chinese soldier at gunpoint, Kapaun saw an enemy soldier with his weapon drawn and moments away from executing an American Soldier - Sergeant First Class Herbert Miller. Kapaun defiantly left his captor, pushed the enemy Soldier to the ground and picked Sergeant Miller up from the ditch. The enemy troops were too stunned to react. Kapaun and Miller spent the remainder of their time in the war interned in a prisoner of war camp in North Korea. Kapaun died there in 1951. He was posthumously presented the Medal of Honor by the President at the White House on April 12th of this year. What's amazing about this story is Kapaun did not shoulder a rifle or wield a bayonet. He carried a Bible and holy water. These were the weapons he used in battle and they were more effective than the bullets of a determined enemy. His death was a tragedy, but his life is what we must learn from. Resolve today as citizens of this Nation to take his story and tell your children and grandchildren, so his legacy and investment might always be remembered. I can tell you that those like Herbert Miller and the POWs who credit Kapaun with saving their lives remember carry on his message of duty and brotherhood until today. Today, I ask that you also carry on his memory.

First Lieutenant Ashley White Stumpf (STUMF) not only epitomizes those who sacrificed all but reminds us of the female Soldiers who have placed themselves in harm's way for their country throughout history and continue to do so even more as we gather here today.

Ashley joined ROTC in her first year of college at Ohio's Kent State University. That's where she met her future husband, Jason Stumpf, also a cadet. If you ask Jason, he will tell you that he fell for Ashley instantly. Her smile locked his heart and from that point on, they were inseparable. After graduation, Jason went on active duty and Ashley joined the National Guard. Jason proposed during Christmas and soon deployed to Afghanistan.

Ashley often talked about deploying. She wanted to serve in a meaningful way – in her mind, deploying was the way for her to change lives and do more for her country as well

as the people of Afghanistan. She was proud of Jason but wished she could be there too. Jason wasn't so sure about that part.

In 2010, we were struggling to maintain the edge in Afghanistan – often missing the bad guy by seconds because the only one with information was an Afghan woman who refused to talk with our male Soldiers – it was culturally taboo. So, the Army began training female Soldiers to be part of elite teams to go out on missions with Army Rangers and Special Forces troops to help build rapport with the Afghan women. These troops would be trained using the same tactics used to build our elite male forces. The Cultural Support Team program, as it is called, filled a critical component of mission success and combatant commanders knew it. Now, the Army needed women for a very specified combat role – one that would put them in the middle of the fight alongside the men. And the men found out quickly, they couldn't do it without them.

When Ashley learned about the program, she was very excited. She knew this was the perfect job for her. It was a way to make an immediate impact on people's lives. But, she'd have to talk to Jason who had just returned from a combat tour in Afghanistan.

Jason listened to Ashley, putting on three hats as they discussed the idea of Ashley volunteering to join the Cultural Support Team. As a husband, he struggled to be supportive of his wife's goals and desires while still wanting to keep her out of harm's way. As an Afghanistan War Veteran, he knew the danger and the frustration, and the fear, and the death. As an Army officer, he wanted the Army to have the best person for the job. He knew that was Ashley. Watching the excitement in her eyes as she talked about the opportunity, he knew she had to go.

Ashley and Jason spent the remaining time before her deployment getting ready. She was always the fastest runner in the group, but Jason made sure she pushed herself to be tougher and stronger than she had ever been in her life.

During the deployment, when she called home, they never talked about work. She'd ask about their "baby," a Siberian Husky named Gunner, or she'd listen to Jason complain about work. Jason knew she was happy. She was doing exactly what she set out to do.

It was a Saturday morning when Jason's doorbell rang. A peek through the peephole revealed the worst scene an Army spouse can ever see. The commander, first sergeant and the chaplain were there – dressed in their blue Army Service Uniforms. Ashley had died - a victim of an improvised explosive device – alongside her were Sergeant First Class Kristoffer Domeij and Private First Class Christopher Horns. All three died serving their nation – in combat – shoulder to shoulder. We honor them all on this Memorial Day.

3: The people who carry on

On Memorial Day, tradition dictates that the Stars and Stripes are raised briskly against the wind to the top of the staff and then solemnly lowered to the position of half-staff, where it remains only until noon. It is then raised to full-staff for the remainder of the day. The half-staff position remembers the more than one million women and men who gave their lives in service of their Nation. At noon their memory is raised by the living who resolve not to let their sacrifice be in vain, but to rise up in their stead and continue the fight for liberty.

That flag is raised by people like Herbert Miller and artilleryman Captain Jason Stumpf. Their pain is deeply rooted, but so also is their resolve to tell the story of their Soldier, their battle-buddy, their spouse.

Feel free to include a story of a Gold Star Family from your community (who may be attending your event) here. For example: "People like Mary Joyce, here with us today, keep our brave sons and daughters alive with their steadfast dedication to telling their stories. Mary woke up this morning to place a flag and bouquet of flowers on the grave of her oldest son, Joseph, age 24, who died in Afghanistan just last year. She carries on every day, telling his story and honoring his life. It is a painful task that heals just a bit with each telling.

Every military family lives in perpetual fear of the knock on the door that is accompanied by three service members in blue. There are men and women here and across the country, like Jason and Herbert, whose lives were never the same after that knock. But, they carry on each day knowing a void only they can endeavor to fill. So many mothers and wives, husbands and fathers, extended family and friends do their duty every day to

ensure their loved one is remembered. They carry on each day with pictures on mantels and mementos of a life not fully lived. They carry on understanding that their Soldier chose this life of service and thus they understood the potentiality of their death as a sacrifice for the sake of freedom. These men and women left behind, carry on their Soldier's message; raising-up their memory like an unfurled flag. Today we also honor you, for you bear a burden only you can comprehend. We are grateful for the support you gave your Soldier, so they could carry out the mission of protecting people like my family and your family. We are grateful you are here to carry on the story so that we might also know your Soldier's bravery. We thank you for YOUR service and promise to help YOU carry on.

This is another opportunity to ask the audience to applaud the Gold-Star Families.

Conclusion

It is our responsibility as citizens to remember the Nation's brave fallen men and women – whether they died on foreign lands in the heat of battle or after a lifetime in the uniform of our Army. And, never forget the men and women who know all too much the cost of our freedom, for their service to this country is the greatest gift of all.

Finally, as you get ready to round out your long Memorial Day weekend with barbeques, parades and family gatherings, resolve to continue the narrative of this holiday with your loved ones. What day is better than today to commit to doing this small task? Later, after the sun sets and after the smell of hotdogs and burgers waft away, I ask you to stop and reflect on this day and the Soldiers who paid a price we will never be able to match. Remember that today is both a somber day and a day to rejoice. Today is both a day to weep and to sing with joy. Today is both a day of forgotten valor and a day to remember it. Today is a day of spring's renewal in the shadow of winter's mortality. Most of all, today is a day to tell the stories of the Soldiers of battlefields and decades past, so the Soldiers of yesterday and today are never forgotten by the children of tomorrow.

(Applause)

Feel free to add thanks that may be appropriate for your event.