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Secretary Wilkie Memorial Day 2020 message

WASHINGTON – Today, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie released the following video [message](#) in honor of Memorial Day 2020.

Our country has been blessed with men and women whose sacrifices allowed us to flourish as individuals, as a society and as a nation. On Memorial Day, we pause to remember, honor and express our gratitude to all those Americans who lost their lives in uniform.

The names of many of them are forever memorialized in our Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), State Veterans and American Battle Monuments cemeteries across our country and around the world.

It is true that this Memorial Day is somewhat different. As we fight the COVID-19 pandemic, we do not gather as we normally would to honor our nation's heroes. But we can still remember and honor them by spending a quiet moment paying homage to their courage and sacrifice.

I also encourage all Americans to pay tribute to deceased Veterans by visiting the [Veterans Legacy Memorial](#). This site contains a memorial page for each Veteran interred in a VA national cemetery. Since May 14, online visitors have been able to leave a written "tribute" in memory and appreciation for a Veteran's service.

At the end of his second inaugural address on March 4, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln asked that we remember the obligations our nation has, to those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Civil War.

His iconic speech, etched in granite at the Lincoln Memorial, still guides those of us privileged to work at VA today:

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan ..."

Those words are the basis of our VA mission to care for our living Veterans and their families. That's why, later this year, we will memorialize in bronze Lincoln's charge to the nation at all our VA cemeteries.

From generation to generation, Americans have answered the call to duty from Bunker Hill to Baghdad. In small skirmishes and epic battles, Americans of every generation have stepped forward to fight for freedom when called upon.

And, they are doing so today as they stand guard across our nation and around the world.

May God bless those we honor today, those currently serving America in uniform and all our nation's Veterans.

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