

Memorial Day Speech

When I first started collecting my thoughts, which would later become the very words I speak before you today, I was very torn.

I didn't want to come up here and be labeled as un-patriotic, or disrespectful, but I want to speak candidly about the War, that these young men and women fought and died in.

I stayed up till dawn a few times just searching for the words, which would be appropriate for a day like today.

Today is Memorial Day, a day of mourning, a day to be held respectfully in the hearts of all Americans. It is a day to remember, and honor our dead.

And yet as I stand here, and some blogger or columnist prepares to demonize my actions, his audience, the same people who will call me disrespectful, are attending a super sale somewhere, or maneuvering their boat around the harbor, an American flag waving from the stern, as they toss back a few beers.

These same people will most certainly have much to talk about tomorrow. They'll denounce my words as subversive and traitorous. They will say my words are a dishonor to these Soldiers, and to all those who have worn the uniform.

How do we honor these souls? 4,082 young men and women who have died in Iraq, and the millions more who have died in past wars. How do we honor them?

As I asked myself this question, I came across this quote by Carl Schurz. He was a German immigrant who went on to become an ambassador, Union Army General, and a senator.

He was a man noted for his high principles, and moral conscience. He said.

“The peace and welfare of this and coming generations of Americans will be secure only as we cling to the watchword of true patriotism: It is our country, when right to be kept right, when wrong to be put right.”

Some will have you believe that you honor them by glorifying the war, and waving your flag, without asking why they were sent over there in the first place. They want us to be silent. They want us to celebrate and be merry as our children die overseas.

I think we have a responsibility as Americans to honor these young souls, by speaking out against this war.

We honor their sacrifice by seeking the truth, demanding justice, and by speaking for those who have been forever silenced.

We honor them by demanding, that their brothers and sisters are brought home now, and that never again, will they be put in harms way, unless absolutely necessary. By ensuring that never again will they have to kill in the name of profit.

We honor them by demanding that our Veterans are treated with dignity, and not cast aside like garbage, after serving our country.

We honor them by holding those elected by the people accountable to the people, and not the corporations.

We honor them by demanding the restoration of civil liberties, the very freedoms they were told they were fighting for.

To do nothing, and to go along with the Bush agenda, is the greatest form of dishonor. It would be as if we had sent them overseas, as if we had lied to them. We would share the guilt of this administration.

Today we honor them, by telling this administration, “ We will not be silenced!” “We want the truth, we want justice.” “Bring our loved ones home now!”

This war is not a mistake, it is a crime.