



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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In Memorial

JEFFERSON CITY – A tremendous sense of country, nation, patriotism and pride fills us whenever we see the images of another Navy, Air Force, Marines, Army, Reserve or Guard unit called to duty and sent on their way. When the great ships become specks on the horizon, when the armories have emptied, a sense of gratitude builds within us.

Ours is a nation whose independence was won by those in the armed services. And ours is a nation whose freedoms have been continually protected ever since by the brave men and women serving our country.

One can look to the history books to get a sense of the enormous debt we as free people owe those we send off to war. But perhaps no better lesson serves than to turn on the evening news or read the day's paper. Right here, today, thousands of American men and women are defending the tenets of democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan and a host of other hotspots around the globe.

Our military men and women are making clear progress in these conflicts that, left unchecked, would surely boil to where even the notions of open societies and free people were vaporized.

It's also clear that much remains to be done in prosecuting the war on terrorism.

And we know in our heart of hearts that preserving an enduring freedom is a mission whose work will never reach a point where it can be considered done.

The dangers remain forever present.

As in all of our wars past, America's service men and women are sacrificing a great deal so that we here at home can enjoy the rights that freedom makes possible. And, as an inescapable burden of warfare through the ages, many fighting under the Stars and Stripes over these past months have made the Supreme Sacrifice – their lives cruelly ended, never again to enjoy what they fought so hard to protect.

And so it is that fate and circumstance return some in our Armed Forces home under a far more solemn procession than the one that sent them off to battle. Our eyes cloud as we watch our fallen country men and women carried from planes and sent home for all time. We are thankful for their service. We are sorrowful for the loss.

Freedom, we know, is not preserved without extraordinary cost.

Since the Civil War, we have had Memorial Day in which to honor those whose lives were forever frozen in time so that our nation might live to see another day under the light of freedom and the empowerment of choice. This year, especially, let us give thought each day to those taken away, and offer a prayer to all our fallen leave behind.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.