



# WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler  
District 32



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**Week of May 28, 2006**

## In Memorial, Always

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JEFFERSON CITY – Freedom has always been at the forefront of American battlegrounds, whether the wars were fought on our own soil or on lands across the seas. Since the American Revolution, millions of American service members have lost their lives in this nation’s wars.

This past Monday, Americans visited cemeteries and lined the streets during parades commemorating those who committed to freedom until their very last breath. Others gathered with family and friends to mark the day of observance with a picnic or barbecue. Although the type of celebration might have varied from person to person, what was celebrated remained the same—the ultimate sacrifice for liberty.

Upon the proclamation from General John Logan, who was the national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, Memorial Day was first observed on May 20, 1868. The day was marked with the placing of flowers on the graves of soldiers of the Union and the Confederacy at Arlington National Cemetery. Although it was originally meant to honor the fallen soldiers in the Civil War, Memorial Day was later changed to honor anyone who died in an American conflict.

For centuries, our nation has been exemplar in portraying how a land and its people can indeed be free. Free to express opinions. Free to choose religions. Free to choose how or how not to celebrate holidays, such as Memorial Day. These freedoms remain ours because of the members of the armed services who have put our country before their own lives.

The ranks of the nation’s veterans continue to grow; some will perish so that liberty can thrive. Thousands of American men and women are at this moment fighting to spread democratic ideals to Iraq, Afghanistan and other nations in need of political stabilization. Members of the armed services from Southwest Missouri, such as the National Guard 203rd Engineer Battalion, day in and day out fulfill their duties that have earned this country the nickname of “the land of the free.”

Whenever soldiers sign on to serve our country, they accept the fact that their commitment could require the ultimate sacrifice. This risk does not deter them, nor diminish their patriotism, and that courage can only be admired and appreciated.

The brave men and women who do not make it out of war alive are more than just a statistic or an engraved name on a plaque. Each is a person who was loved, who left behind a family, friends, a home and a community. Each one deserves to be remembered and honored for paying the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Although May 30 is the traditional day of observance for all those who fought for freedom and died, every day we should be grateful for those we have lost, those who have returned home and those who are in the middle of defending the essence of America. Our freedom is only as strong as the will of those who fight for it.

*Senator Gary Nodler represents the people of  
Newton, Jasper and Dade counties in the Missouri Senate*