May 26, 2014

Dear Friends:

While I regret that I am unable to be there in person with you today, I am certainly with you in spirit as you honor our nation’s fallen heroes this Memorial Day.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I, a conflict that claimed the lives of more than 116,000 American servicemembers. World War I was especially devastating due to the advent of weapons that could kill masses of soldiers and civilians in a single attack. The carnage was enough to cause some to hope that an allied victory represented an end to warfare itself. The century since has sadly seen neither the end of warfare nor the last American to die on foreign soil in pursuit of a freer, safer and more stable world.

From the ugliness of World War I comes one of the most famous war poems written. The work is titled “In Flanders Fields,” and I think the final part is particularly appropriate for this occasion.

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:*
To you from failing hands we throw
*The torch; be yours to hold it high.*
If ye break faith with us who die
*We shall not sleep, though poppies grow*
*In Flanders fields.*

Today is the day we set aside in solemn remembrance of those American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who gave their lives in World War I, in other wars and in other service to this country. We acknowledge that we could not ask any more of them than the sacrifice they made and that we cannot ever thank them enough. We remember also those they left behind, our military families, who have given this country so much of themselves.

So whether we unfurl flags, lay flowers on headstones, or spend time with family, let us take some time this Memorial Day and resolve not to break faith with those who died in service to this country.

Sincerely

Ron Wyden
United States Senator