



4646 Dakota St. SE  
Prior Lake, MN 55372

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A message from our Mayor:

## Our Past and Present Heroes

America's first Memorial Day was celebrated on May 30, 1868 to commemorate the soldiers who perished in our Civil War. Over the years this tradition, held annually on May 30, evolved into one of our nation's oldest and most important holidays.

As we should, 139 years later, we pay public and private tribute to the brave men and women who took the oath of allegiance as members of America's armed forces and died honoring that allegiance. We place flags on these heroes' gravesites and make speeches in town squares because they fought and died defending our freedom, security and prosperity. The very foundation of this country rests on the selflessness of our honored veterans who sacrificed so much.

More than a million have paid the ultimate price in the wars and conflicts this nation has fought since the first colonial soldiers took up arms in 1775 to fight for our independence. And even today our dedicated and courageous soldiers are engaged around the world – performing their duty so that we can enjoy continued freedom.

This Memorial Day we again are reminded of the heroism and sacrifice of the soldiers who keep safe the world's great hope for liberty, equality and peace. This Memorial Day, we again are reminded that our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers still die in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is up to us to uphold the legacy of these past and present heroes. All too often, we might forget the responsibility we have to keep the memory of our brave men and women alive. All too often, we might forget how fortunate we are to live in a country that values life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In his Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln asked how a country should honor its heroes. How we should acknowledge their sacrifice? Lincoln's answer is that we cannot. No speech, no monument, nor any wreath can fully convey their sacrifice or our gratitude.

We are taking positive steps to pay homage, however. I am pleased to announce that the dedication of the Minnesota WWII Veteran's Memorial will take place Saturday, June 9 at the State Capitol from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The City of Prior Lake, the Prior Lake VFW, Scott County Transit and the Scott County Veterans Services Office are working together to coordinate free bus rides for WWII veterans and their spouses and caregivers that morning so they can attend the ceremony. WWII Veterans can reserve a space by calling (952) 496-8176 by May 31.

The memorial will be a visible reminder of the Minnesotans who served during World War II and those who died in the line of duty. Their valiant efforts helped secure the freedoms that we enjoy today and secure America's leadership throughout the world.

As Lincoln said, we can never repay the debt we owe those who fought and died for this country, but we must remember on Memorial Day that behind every soldier's grave marker or every engraved name on a memorial is a hero who gave his or her life and a family who has paid dearly in the loss of a loved one.

Let us join together as a nation this coming Monday, May 30 and give our collective gratitude and remembrance to all the heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice. May God bless their friends and families – and may they always be remembered.

**Mayor Jack Haugen**