

News From Congressman Ben Cline



CONGRESSMAN
BEN CLINE



Sixth District Perspectives with Congressman Ben Cline

Honoring our Fallen Heroes

This Memorial Day, we honor and pay tribute to those servicemembers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to this Nation.

America has been uniquely blessed and divinely inspired to produce men and women who run toward danger, rather than away from it. Men and women who stand in the gap and fight for freedom and against oppression, and who personify John 15:13, which proclaims, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Originally called Decoration Day, this day was set aside to commemorate those who died during the Civil War. In 1968, Congress passed the *Uniform Monday Holiday Act*, which established Memorial Day, and in 1971, the day became a Federal Holiday.

Virginia and the Sixth Congressional District have a long history of heroism and the giving of blood and treasure of its sons and daughters. There are few places as steeped in the sacrifices of those who fought our Nation's battles.

From Arlington to Norfolk, from Winchester to Lynchburg, and from Manassas to the Shenandoah Valley, the Commonwealth can claim the mantle of not only being the cradle of democracy but also the arsenal of freedom.

With the withdrawal from Afghanistan last August, the United States effectively ended over 20 years of continued war with the blood and treasures of nearly 7,000 servicemembers used as collateral in the Global War on Terror. Two sons of the Sixth District are among this number. West Point graduates Captain Andrew Ross and First Lieutenant Stephen “Chase” Prasnicki, both from my hometown of Lexington, died in Afghanistan and remind us that the sweetness of enduring peace has always been tainted by the bitterness of personal sacrifice.



Captain Andrew Ross (L) and First Lieutenant Stephen “Chase” Prasnicki (R)

We all know the stories of great Virginians like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Patrick Henry, and George Mason, all founding fathers. Yet their story may be different without the help of a young French military officer named Marquis de Lafayette, whose efforts were essential in aiding America in defeating the British in the Revolutionary War.

In 1824, a half-century after the battles of the Revolution, Lafayette began a yearlong tour of the then 24 states in the Union, where he visited the tomb of his friend and comrade George Washington at Mount Vernon. In Massachusetts, he renewed his friendship with John Adams, and at Monticello, he spent a week visiting Thomas Jefferson.

It was during this final tour of the United States, Lafayette gathered soil from all 24 states and planned to be buried under American soil from them all. Unfortunately, the only soil that made it back to France was from Bunker Hill. Upon his death in 1834, that soil was spread over his interred remains, filling his grave. His eternal resting place is under the blanket of Freedom America symbolizes.

Similarly, it has been said that the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women to fight and die in far-off lands, and all we ask for in return is enough land to bury those that do not return. In places like Normandy, Luxembourg, Manila, and Florence, the final resting

place of those who perished is and will always be on American soil, flying the American flag.





In Isaiah 6:8, a man cries out, "Here I am Lord, Send Me". For the last 246 years, our Nation has been graced by those who have lived the tenants of Isaiah and have affirmed the verse when they answered, Here I am Lord, Send Me. They have done that, and will continue to do so, and America will continue to be blessed with men and women who serve our Nation, fight for its ideals, and are buried under its flag.

America is facing challenging days ahead, but we are blessed to have brave men and women willing to stand in the gap to defend our freedom. This Memorial Day, we remember all who gave their last full measure while wearing our Nation's uniform. May God continue to bless our troops and the United States of America.



Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Congressman. If my office can ever be of assistance, please contact my Washington office at (202) 225-5431.

For the latest updates from Washington and across the Sixth District, please follow my [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

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