

Memorial Day Speech  
May 31, 2021  
Mayor Jason F. Cilento

Hello everyone. It is so good to be able to stand beside you all, in person, to honor our fallen heroes this Memorial Day.

Dunellen always comes together to do what is right, and when it comes to our Veterans, they deserve to be remembered with our presence instead of our absent observation. I therefore sincerely thank you all for being here, as we worked hard to ensure this year's Memorial Day parade and ceremony would be safe for all to participate.

I would first like to thank the Dunellen American Legion Post 119 and the Dunellen Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5479 for their leadership in serving all the veterans in our community, as well as the state of New Jersey and the United States and for making sure we had today's parade and ceremony to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the freedoms we all hold so dearly.

I also wish to thank the members of our community who assisted our veterans' organizations in the preparation of our parade and ceremony today. Thank you to Alex Miller and the Recreation Commission, the Dunellen Police and Fire Departments, and the OEM and Rescue Squad for being here today and every day. Additionally, I wish to extend thanks to the honorable Deputy Mayor of Green Brook, Jim Van Arsdale, for being here with us each year, our parade's Grand Marshall, Mr. Don Musson, as well as to the Dunellen Borough Council and all of the speakers and dignitaries here with us today.

On this day of remembrance and ritual, I think about fortitude, sacrifice, and even rebirth. Today, relatives place flowers on the graves of those who lost their lives defending our nation; community members take pleasure in each other's company as we march together to honor America's fallen heroes; and the time-honored holiday of Memorial Day provides us all with

the opportunity to reflect upon the history that has made America unique among the nations of this world.

Americans are known to persevere in the face of adversity. Time and time again we have been tested, but yet successfully battled forces of evil be it fascism, Nazism, dictatorships, imperialism, slavery, and many other manifestations of injustice. We have only been victorious through our collective courage, empathy, and resilience. All of us standing here today share in and benefit from the fundamental principles that coalesced during the American War of Independence, solidified at the Constitutional Convention of 1787, but Memorial Day specifically honors and thanks the soldiers, sailors, airmen and women, marines and Coast Guard members whose ultimate sacrifice was selflessly exemplary of the values we forged together as a nation.

The American dream of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness has and continues to represent hope and possibility for hundreds of thousands around the world. As we continuously

strive to defend and ultimately amplify that dream, we must always remember our fallen heroes and veterans who perished to preserve it. Let Memorial Day be a reminder not only of how our heroes overcame our enemies, but also how, in memory of their service to our country, we must live up to the right to freedom they sacrificed their lives to protect.

May God continue to give us all the strength and courage to do what is right, not only for ourselves, but for all of our neighbors. In remembrance and honor of our fallen heroes and veterans, let us remain good to one another through whatever challenges we have yet to face. God Bless you, God Bless all of our veterans and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and may God Bless this our great nation for giving us the opportunity to continue to improve and build upon the foundations afforded us by the service of others. Thank you.

