

## Memorial Day, 2003 Stan Stahl, Ph.D.

Rita and I are on Holiday in France, but I don't want to let Memorial Day pass without reflecting on it. That's how freedom erodes ... when we allow ourselves to be too busy to stop and pay attention. So instead of an essay, I'm sending along something sent to me recently by my good friend, the President and Founder of the National Veteran's Foundation, Shad Meshad, and my Uncle [and good friend and veteran], Marc Howard.

The following was written by the Rev. Dennis Edward O'Brien, a Marine Corps veteran of World War II:

*It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press.*

*It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us the freedom of speech.*

*It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who gives us the freedom to demonstrate.*

*It is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag.*

As you know, I believe very deeply in freedom of the press ... I believe very deeply in freedom of speech ... I believe very deeply in our freedom to demonstrate ... And I believe just as deeply in our right ... even ... to burn the flag.

So let us echo Lincoln's words, spoken so eloquently at Gettysburg 140 years ago:

*It is for us the living ... to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.*

*It is ... for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.*

Have a thoughtful Memorial Day.

And should you want to do a good deed in memory of those, from all nations, who have given their lives so that we may live free, please consider sending a donation to the National Veteran's Foundation. Their address is 6151 West Century Blvd., Suite 530, Los Angeles, CA 90045. You can get more information on their web site [www.nvf.org](http://www.nvf.org).

Let Freedom Ring.