# Memorial Day Address
# Given by Frank Iafolla (Francis)
# Corporal USMC

Good morning, it is an honor for me to be here today; and, it is wonderful to see you this morning.

Why are we here? It is Memorial Day, Decoration Day; and, we remember.

Remember those who came before us. Those who made the ultimate sacrifice; and, to recognize those who made, and continue to make Memorial Day in Medfield a very special day.

I remember as a young boy in the 1950's going to Vine Lake Cemetery with my grandfather, WWI Veteran Barney Chick, to place flags on the graves of veterans, which he had been doing since 1919. There were a lot fewer flags back then. He was also instrumental in the creation of the Legion Lot at the cemetery; and, the installation of the flagpole there which honors all Veterans.

Even then I knew placing the flags was important; but, the ride with my grandfather in his Model "T" Ford was the highlight of the day for me. The Model "T" is long gone; but, the memories and tradition continue.

I remember in grade school marching in this very parade with the Scouts; and, it's good to see all you scouts here today.

I was also here with the High School Band, beating a drum, under the direction of US Navy Veteran, Robert Hersee. Each and every year as we entered the cemetery, he would remind us to, "Unsnare your drums; a muffled beat."

During that same era, former Selectman and Cemetery Commissioner Joe Roberts, would hire half a dozen kids to sweep and clean up along the parade route.

I often think of how hiring youngsters to participate in the "decoration" could instill a lifelong sense of pride in one's community.

We do this every year because we care and we remember.

We remember those who did not return, who did not get to fulfill their hopes and their dreams.

Remember,

Stephen Hinkley, MHS Class of 1967. Although we were very good friends, he was different somehow; a "water walker." Stephen served as an altar boy at St. Edward's. His take on going to Vietnam was, "What if your neighbor was in trouble, wouldn't you help him?"

Recently, I spoke with a friend from Steve's company in Vietnam. Sgt. Ty Kittle told me Steve was a good Marine, combat brother, and friend. He was quiet, friendly, did his job in the field, and was well respected by the squad. He never swore and he never took the Lord's name in vain.

Steve was committed to his Catholic faith. While he was in Vietnam, he became close to the Battalion Chaplin, which led to his becoming the Chaplin's Assistant. Steve confided in Sgt. Kittle that he felt a calling to become a priest when he left the marines.

Sadly, that wasn't to be. Lance Corporal Steven Hinkley died while serving mass; a direct hit from a mortar round in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam, on May 6, 1968.

God called Steven home.

Remember,

Peter Kristof, MHS class of 1968. I always enjoyed our conversations together and racing our '57 Chevys through town; Petey always won. He was a year younger than I; and kids back then hung out at the water bubbler in front of Town Hall. I recall him talking about his older brother in the Marines and how he looked up to him and how Peter wanted to become a Marine.

Peter's best friend from Echo Company, PFC Fred Zerio, a Marine who emigrated from Italy at age 14, told me how Peter liked to call him, "The Blond Italian," and, Fred would refer to Pete as, "My Little Buddy," because Peter was always yelling at him to, "Put your helmet on!"

PFC Peter Kristof was killed in action at Mutters Ridge, Hill 484, Quang Tri Province, Vietnam on August 10, 1969.

The hill was being attacked by NVA Regulars. As Fred Zerio tells it, Peter was in a foxhole on the wire with a Pvt. Turner when they took a direct mortar hit while protecting other members of the platoon. Only six Marines walked off that Hill the next morning. Peter Kristof was not one of them. Peter Kristof was a Marine and forever will be a Marine.

We also recognize those who did return from war to live and work in Medfield, and who are here with us today. People such as:

Joseph Ryan, WWII. Served as Medfield's Fire Chief for 20 years, and later became the official "Town Greeter."

Phillip Burr, Korea. Served as Medfield's Veterans' Agent in the 1960's and quietly continues to serve at VA hospitals in the area.

Albert Manganello, Vietnam. Has been involved with helping Veterans ever since returning home.

Eric Pellegrini, Iraq. Here today as a member of the Medfield Police Department; still serving, still protecting; and, still collecting Toys for Tots.

There is one other person I would like to recognize. Most of you know her as the friendly school crossing guard, who, as a young girl, lost two brothers in WWII. Mrs. Elizabeth Mann escaped from an East German/Soviet camp walking miles in waist deep snow and freezing to seek freedom. When you have lost members of your family to war it doesn't matter who is on whose side.

Today, two generations removed from that time, her granddaughter is serving in the United States Army.

War is a mess. Chaos.

We all grieve, we all cry, and we all bleed the same.

I will go to my grave wondering why we, as human beings, continue to do this to each other; and, I pray we have the power of appealing to the best that is in us; not the worst.

I thank you for coming this morning and I thank you for remembering.