

Remember to Honor Those Who Have Fallen

The 740,000 Americans who make up the nation's state and local police forces live the true meaning of duty, sacrifice and honor each day. They routinely put their lives on the line to enforce the laws that govern our society. Officers keep the streets safe, they pursue those who would steal from our homes and businesses, and they protect us from those who would prey on our children and the elderly.

Although we don't often thank them for it, they help protect our most cherished rights as laid out by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence: "the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." We owe these brave and committed people a great deal of gratitude for their contribution to our freedom and security.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy designated May 15th as Peace Officers' Memorial Day, and the week in which May 15th falls as National Police Week. The National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) leads national activities throughout the week in Washington, DC to mark the occasion. These activities enable citizens to join together in commemorating law enforcement officers, whose brave deeds led them to the ultimate sacrifice or left them disabled.

Among those honored are the 72 police officers who lost their lives on September 11th. Their selfless acts helped save over 25,000 lives. This tragic day was a demonstration of dedication to duty like few others, which resulted in more police fatalities than any other single event in our nation's history.

Yet everyday, similar acts of heroism and valor are performed by police officers across our nation.

As part of this week of recognition and honor, law enforcement officers and their families from across the nation will participate in the 16th Annual Candlelight Vigil at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial located in Washington, DC. The memorial is a moving monument of remembrance that has the names of 14,000 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty engraved on its surface.

In addition, the 23rd Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Day Services will take place at the United States Capitol on May 15th.

The words of John F. Kennedy strike a cord this week, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers." As these valiant men and women died because they made it their duty to protect and serve, it is our duty to honor and remember them to the highest degree.

For more information, please visit the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial website at <http://www.nleomf.org>.