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Memorial Day, May 26, 2003
“A Moment of Silence for National Heroes”

by

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On Monday, May 26, 2003, this great and prosperous nation will celebrate Memorial Day with parades, marching bands, picnics, ceremonies and speeches, and also with our quiet thoughts for the sacrifices that our nation’s sons and daughter have made, and are making, to secure our safety and maintain our freedom.

As a special tribute to our military veterans, to the families who supported them, and to those not in uniform who also participated in securing our nation’s freedom, please pause at exactly 3 p.m. and participate in a moment of silence to remember our heroes and reflect on their achievements. Whether at work, traveling, or enjoying a celebration activity; please take a moment at 3 p.m. to silently remember those who have protected our country with their lives and their spirit.

From Hawaii to the nation’s capital, from the Florida Keys to the land of the midnight sun; the names of our heroes are carved in granite and stone memorials across the nation. Time will wear away the names, but it cannot touch the legacy of freedom that they have left for us. And in the hearts of many loved ones and family members, they will never be forgotten.

This Memorial Day there will be special remembrances for America’s Daughter, Lori Piestewa, who was the first American Indian woman to die in combat. Her young children, 5-year-old Brandon and 3-year-old Carla, will travel with Lori’s parents to meet the President and First Lady. They later will attend the unveiling of a new exhibit, featuring their mother and five other Native American women of the armed services, at the Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. We can honor Lori, and the 157 other soldiers who gave their lives in Operation Iraqi Freedom, with our shared moment of silence for all who died serving our country. Our silence will also honor all those serving proudly today to protect this country and create opportunities for freedom in other lands. And in the silence we should also remember those veterans who are part of the IHS family and also those no longer with us for their service to our country and to improving the health of American Indian and Alaska Native people.

We can all spare one moment to honor their sacrifice for our freedom and safety. I encourage all IHS employees to participate with all Americans in the National Moment of Remembrance this Memorial Day.