

Governor remembers the fallen at Dover cemetery

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Gov. Scott Walker, U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., and U.S. Navy Command Master Chief Shawn Isbell honor the posting of the colors on Sunday by members of Racine's Agerholm-Gross Marine Corps League Detachment 346 at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Dover. For additional photos from Sunday's ceremony, see Local, Page A9.

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Remembered with honor

Six Americans buried at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery are from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars:

Lance Cpl. Daniel Wyatt, U.S. Marine Corps

Pvt. Evan Bixler, U.S. Army

Staff Sgt. Robert Basham, U.S. Army

Cpl. Jason Lemke, U.S. Army

Cpl. Richard Nelson, U.S. Marine Corps

Spc. Eric Poelman, U.S. Army

DOVER — Intermittent rain showers outlined a somber ceremony on Sunday remembering the soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines who are buried at Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

The Memorial Day weekend ceremonial rifle salute by members of Union Grove's American Legion Post 171 was just as visceral for visitors as the dozen or so bagpipers from Wisconsin Independent Pipers. The emotional playing of "Taps" was made poignant by the lone bugler who could not be seen behind the monuments but was heard creating a presence like the headstones that surrounded the ceremony.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., said the May 22 suicide bombing in Manchester, England, was a reminder how important our freedoms are as Americans.

"They define us as a people. They are worth fighting for. We must never surrender our freedoms to fear and the hateful terrorism that seeks to attack them," Baldwin said.

She said the incident should be a reminder of the American fallen who came before.

Gov. Scott Walker, the keynote speaker, spoke directly to the veterans in the large tents on the cemetery grounds who came to pay their respects to their comrades in arms.

"We live in the land of the free because of the brave," Walker said. "We can never repay their debt, but we'll keep trying."

Walker shared his experiences as a Boy Scout growing up in Delavan in the 1970s. His assistant scoutmaster was a veteran of not only World War I but also World War II.

He said that his neighbor, Claire C. Condon, taught him how to recognize service by showing him and his brother how to post flags at a local cemetery.

“He told me the story of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice,” Walker said.

Walker said the stories of those before us need to be told.

“Each of you have great stories like that of people who have had an impact and helped carry on the stories so it wasn’t just merely remembering their death but rather their life and legacy,” Walker said.

The message was also carried quietly by Racine resident Lisa Bixler, who was grateful for the recognition her son, U.S. Army Pvt. Evan Bixler, who died in the Iraq War on Christmas Eve 2006.

“I’m more than pleased that they go on with their lives — it’s what men and woman (in uniform) sacrifice for. We live, we have fun and we enjoy our freedoms, but we don’t forget,” Bixler said.

She said her son Evan is remembered for how he lived, not just for how he died.

“In the Army they referred to him as ‘ton of fun,’ ” Bixler said. “He made boot camp bearable and tell the guys, ‘this what it’s all about! Come on, let’s live it.’ He was strong.”

Others, like Vietnam veteran Sgt. Jim Wolter, were quietly resolute. Upon seeing the Army colors pass him, Wolter arose from his mechanized chair and stood in respect.

The Racine resident was overcome by the moment and declined to share his military experience, but beamed with pride before his two young grandsons who were there with him.

“I hope you will join me at that neighborhood barbecue or that family activity where you take the time in remembering our fallen heroes and celebrating our freedoms,” said Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester.

http://journaltimes.com/news/local/governor-remembers-the-fallen-at-dover-cemetery/article_b64e6f69-d07d-5978-ab24-a45c419da953.html