

June 2005 - Remarks at the Ribbon Cutting for Hays Army Reserve Center

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by Congressman Jerry Moran

June 4, 2005

I am honored to join you all this morning to recognize our community's citizen-warriors and to celebrate the construction of this new Army Reserve Center.

It is important we offer our sincere appreciation to the men and women who sacrifice so much to defend our country. I know my words can't express what we owe to the men and women in the 388th Medical Logistic Battalion, but I want to share with each and everyone of you my deepest gratitude. It is your bravery, your spirit and your sacrifice that safeguards our freedoms and our way of life. You represent the best of Kansas and the best of America. We're proud of you, we thank you, and we welcome you home.

The 388th has a proud history - and with this new Reserve facility - a promising future. Kansans know about service and sacrifice, about duty and courage. Our state has the eighth highest mobilization rates in the nation for Guard and Reserve soldiers. When our way of life was attacked on September 11, our country called. And that call was answered by these ordinary citizens took up arms to do extraordinary things.

We should always be reminded that today's soldier is more and more the citizen-soldier. These are our sons and daughters, our moms and dads, our friends and neighbors. These are everyday people who put love of country over self, who have gone from teaching high school to instructing soldiers, from driving their children to school to navigating the mountain roads of Afghanistan, and from attending Sunday church with their families to bowing their heads over the hot sands of Iraq. They come from communities across Kansas, willing to serve on the front lines to protect our country and bring peace to struggling nations.

The nearly 200 members of the 388th continue the tradition of the citizen-soldier. This award-winning unit has proven time and time again their willingness to answer when our country calls. Nearly 90 percent of the unit has been deployed at least once, providing vital medical supplies in some of the most dangerous parts of the world. They have supported operations in Bosnia, in Kosovo, in Southwest Asia, including Afghanistan and Iraq, and in defense of our homeland.

Make no mistake, these are not easy missions. War is not easy. It is filled with tragedy and loss. General Douglas MacArthur said, "The soldier above all other people prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war."

As our armed forces work toward peace, the members of the 388th not only bear the wounds and scars themselves, they must also carry out their noble mission to save the lives of their fellow soldiers who are suffering. Freedom always comes with a price, but the efforts of this Battalion to provide medical care lessens the cost in servicemembers' lives. The 388th has carried out their mission with the compassion and professionalism.

I appreciate the work of the City of Hays and Ellis County in support of this unit and this construction project. It is rewarding to me to have this opportunity to see a project I have supported in Congress come to completion, and though we're just getting off the ground today, this is truly a special event for me. When construction is finished next May, I am confident this site will provide training, administrative, work and storage space to support the critical mission of the unit.

I also appreciate the enormous sacrifices made by the families, friends, and employers of our Reservists. The burden of war is not only on the soldiers serving in war zones, but also on those here at home who struggle to pay the bills, to care for the children, and who wait for their soldiers' return.

Most of all, on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank the servicemembers of the 388th Medical Battalion. May God bless these soldiers and the country they serve.