

Honoring America's Heroes – Lincoln's Words Ring True



Saluting a Pearl Harbor Hero: *Boatswain's Mate First Class Arleigh Birk was just 21 years old and 4,028 miles away from his home in Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota when he watched Japanese planes attack Pearl Harbor from his station on the USS Honolulu on Sunday, December 7, 1941. To mark the 72nd anniversary of the attack, I was so honored to present him with an American flag flown over the U.S. Capitol. The ceremony was held at Hoyt Lakes VFW Post 8144.*

Tomorrow is Veterans Day, and as we prepare to officially honor those who have put themselves in harm's way to serve and protect our great nation, we remember the words of **President Lincoln**, who often observed that the **manner in which we reward and recognize today's veterans will determine the willingness of future generations to answer their country's call.**

You've heard me say it many times before: America's obligation to our vets is sacred - veterans benefits are earned through the patriotism and great service of these brave men and women. They are heroes, and deserve to be treated that way.



This Veterans Roundtable on July 2nd at the Serviceman's Quarters in the Hibbing Memorial Building was one of the many opportunities I had to hear directly from veterans and their families.

Over the past two years, I've been privileged to meet with hundreds of veterans and their families across Minnesota's 8th District – and I especially want to thank those who attended our Veterans Roundtables earlier this year in Duluth, Little Falls, Brainerd, Center City and Hibbing. Your ideas and

input helped shape the landmark, bipartisan Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 to reform the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and provide the resources necessary to eliminate the unconscionable benefits backlog.

That bill also allows vets to obtain medical care close to home, expands programs to treat mental illness, prevent suicides, treat PTSD and sexual trauma, and make better education and training opportunities more available for veterans eager to return to the workforce or start a business.

So while there is much left to do on behalf of our nation's veterans, we are indeed making progress. This Veterans Day issue of the Monday Report notes a number of significant steps forward, along with some of the important tasks ahead.

Finally, if you are a veteran or family member living in the 8th District, and you're experiencing a problem of any kind related to the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA benefits, or VA health care, please don't hesitate to contact me. My staff and I will leave no stone unturned to make it right. I am honored to serve those who have served our great nation.

Have a great week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.