

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Memorial Day Ceremony at Tahoma National Cemetery

May 25, 2026

Sen. Cantwell Remarks

[\[AUDIO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Well, good afternoon, my fellow Washingtonians. We know that there is no better place to be today than to remember those who have served our nation, and no better place to do that than at Tahoma National Cemetery.

I want to thank, before we go any further, the Gateway Band and the Musical Issaquah Singers that are helping today. Thank you very much for that, and to the flyovers for basically remembering the great history of aviation that exists here in the Pacific Northwest.

I especially want to thank Tom Yokes, along with Assistant Directors Ken Alexander and Lindsey Miller, for their leadership in making this ceremony possible, and making every day possible at Tahoma National Cemetery. Thank you so much.

We are here today to honor the brave Americans who died in service to our nation. The very first observation of Memorial Day occurred in 1868 to honor Union soldiers who died in America's Civil War. Today we honor the men and women in uniform who have made the ultimate sacrifice protecting our freedoms.

So we come together on this day as a nation to honor them, to mourn them, and also to remember you, their families, their loved ones, their friends, and those who have to carry on. We are here to show the appreciation of a grateful nation to the brave Americans who answered that call and gave their lives to protect democracy and to ensure a brighter future. The United States would not be where it is today without that heroism and sacrifice.

And although Tahoma National Cemetery was dedicated in 1997, there are service members buried here who fought to defend the Union in the Civil War. Their headstones, like each and every other headstone here, mark not just an eternal resting place, but a story of an individual, of their service to our nation and to the men and women who answered the call of our country.

Since opening in 1997, Tahoma National Cemetery has laid to rest more than 75,000 patriots, including veterans and service members and their families. Today, we also gather to renew our commitment to those who serve and their families across the country. Families are remembering their loved ones, just like we're doing here in Puget Sound. They're remembering, and they're mourning, and our nation is mourning along with them.

Among those we have lost recently, I specifically want to recognize Captain Ariana G. Savino of Covington, Washington, literally a neighbor to us all. Captain Savino earned her commission through the Air Force ROTC program at Central Washington University in 2017 and dedicated her life to serving this country.

No words can fully measure the sacrifice or heal the pain that loss has caused, but we hold her family in our hearts today. America is stronger because of Captain Savino and the servicemen and women like

her, the servicemen and women that you represent, because you are the family members and the friends that are here and helped lay them to rest.

Their story reminds us of how fragile life is, and how heavy the responsibility is that they took up on our behalf. So today, we rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the American promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for every man, every woman and child in our nation.

The state of Washington [is] home to more than 500,000 veterans and active-duty service members, making up [nearly] 9% of our state's population. I am very happy to serve them in the United States Senate, and our work should never stop advancing policies that support veterans and family members and the men and women in service today.

I'd like the members of my staff to stand up, so you can find them afterwards. Josie, Anthony, and Paul. These are people who can help on any veterans problem you still have today. Stand up. Any one of the three of them and me can help, and usually we get a lot of case work when we're here today.

So, just know that we have a constant service there on this Memorial Day in the Pacific Northwest. Let us remember those we have lost. Let us gather on these sacred grounds and give thanks, honor their service with gratitude and remembrance, and tell the nation that they were these were the best among us.

We thank you, the family members. We give you all we can in strength and devotion to sustain the legacy of those who've served our nation. Thank you. And enjoy Memorial Day activities here at Tahoma. Thank you.