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Unspoken Valor

This is the weekend America pauses to honor the men and women who over the decades have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, while harboring a special thought for those who are still in harm's way.

More than 4,000 have been killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan since radical Islamists struck the American homeland nearly nine years ago.

For most of them, their names and the battles they fought in — Tora Bora, Fallujah, Sadr City — will be counted with the fallen of Bunker Hill, Gettysburg, Omaha Beach, the Chosin Reservoir and Khe Sanh.

But not for all.

Indeed, the nature of today's enemies — cells of ruthless butchers without uniform or flag — requires some of America's heroes to sacrifice even their grateful country's open acknowledgement of their service.

Tomorrow, for example, the American Air-

power Museum on Long Island will honor seven CIA employees killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan — but whose names and deeds remain classified, presumably to protect their mission and their comrades still in the field.

Rep. Steve Israel and CIA clandestine-service chief Michael Sulick will be on hand as a B-17 bomber, escorted by the museum's fleet of historic aircraft, scatters flowers near Ground Zero in their honor.

It's only fitting: Though they didn't wear the uniform, they sacrificed for their country as much as any soldier, sailor, airman or Marine who falls in open battle.

Memorial Day is often confused with Veterans Day, the November holiday dedicated to all who served.

But despite the traditional cookouts and other beginning-of-summer festivities, it's a much more solemn occasion.

Those who died deserve to be remembered.

