

Irvana K. Wilks  
Mayor from 2005 - 2013  
Village of Mount Prospect  
Illinois, USA

Read at American Cemetery  
Normandy, France  
For Sister Cities Delegation  
Visit to Sèvres, France  
In October 2007

Hallowed Ground  
By Irvana K. Wilks

We stand on ground made sacred by those buried here.  
They gave their lives to free a country from occupation  
and in that selfless act, they began a crescendo  
that freed a world from a tyrant.

By laying this wreath with our friends from Sèvres,  
we unite our hearts and words in this solemn  
gesture performed so many times since these  
brave men fought over six decades ago.

The soldiers who lived – their Comrades in Arms – returned  
home again to be husbands, fathers, big brothers, teachers,  
poets, farmers, doctors, builders, lawyers, athletes, mentors.  
This wreath speaks to our appreciation for the sacrifices made.

A wreath symbolizes a circle of life uniting humanity. It stands  
for the fields of flowers never returned to by those buried here.  
The ribbons are like the shreds of a flag after battle. For our flag, the  
red stripes speak to the blood shed in defense of liberty.

The white stripes are tears wept by mothers who lost their sons.  
The blue is the sky which encircles our world. Its stars are  
for fifty states, the homes these brave thousands  
left to travel to their destinies.

We honor you, your lives cut short. In this act  
we know the mantle of responsibility to defend liberty  
has passed to our own shoulders.

And so we say in gratitude to you –  
Rest in Peace – Sons of America.