MEMORIAL DAY May 25, 1998
Remarks by Representative Norman L. Major

It is extremely important to remember the significance of this special day. The precious freedoms we all have today have been bought with the blood and lives of over one million service men and women.

We must ensure that our country's heritage is passed on to those who follow in our footsteps, so that these brave servicemen have not died in vain.

We can do this - by learning about some of the military sacrifices that sons and daughters of Plaistow citizens have made on our behalf.

Plaistow has erected six monuments to their memories. The World War I monument (located on the front lawn on the other side of the Town Hall) contains the names of the many Plaistow veterans that fought for the United States, the World War II monument (located NW of the Bandstand) with the names of Plaistow's veterans of this war appearing on an Honor Roll inside the entrance to the Town Hall, the Korean, Vietnam and Gulf War monuments (located on the lawn behind you) and the Civil War monument (located behind the Civil War Cannons) contains the names of the one hundred veterans from Plaistow that fought for the Union.

The name at the top at the top of this Civil War monument, facing the Elm Street side, reads Daniel George.

Daniel George was a young Plaistow man serving as an ordinary seaman on the warship "Chicopee". He is the only serviceman from Plaistow to ever be awarded the United States Congressional Medal of Honor. I will tell you a short story explaining why he received the "Congressional Medal Of Honor".

The Confederates had built an ironclad ship called the Albemarle. This was a wooden ship covered with 4.5 inches of steel armor. She was launched on the Roanoke River in early April of 1864.
 On the 19th of April the Albemarle engaged the Unions Ships Southfield and Miami. The Southfield was sunk and the Miami damaged.

On April 20th the Albemarle bombarded the city of Plymouth forcing the city to surrender to the Confederates. The Albemarle ruled the seaways along the Roanoke River.

On May 5th, a Union fleet of seven ships engaged the Albemarle. All seven of the Union ships retreated damaged, some severely. The Albemarle ruled the waterway for the next six months. The United States Congress called for an investigation.

On the night of October 26 a group of volunteer sailors, including Seaman Daniel George, commanded by Lt. William Cushing set out to capture or sink the Albemarle. They went up the Roanoke in a forty-foot open steamer boat fitted with a cannon and a torpedo. They kept to the riverbanks and traveled in the swamps so not to be detected. Around three o'clock in the morning a sentry from the Albemarle detected them when they were within sight. With shots being fired all around them the small boat speed directly at the Albemarle and its bow went over a protecting boom of logs around the ironclad. With the enemy within thirty feet and firing all around them the crew had to raise, lower, launch and fire the torpedo. The torpedo immediately blew a six-foot hole in the side of the Albemarle and she sank. The blast from the torpedo also resulted in sinking the small open boat. Lt. Cushing and one other seaman made it back to the Union vessels. The rest of the crew was either killed or taken prisoner.

As a result of the sinking of the Albemarle the Union fleet was able to take control of the Roanoke River. The next day the city of Plymouth was recaptured. President Abraham Lincoln sent congratulations and on December 31, 1864 the Congressional Medal of Honor was awarded to this brave crew of sailors. "<u>I salute to the memory of this brave Plaistow sailor - Seaman Daniel George</u>."

This afternoon - I issue to all of you here a challenge.

Pick out a name on any of the Towns Monuments or Honor Rolls and learn about some of the sacrifices these veterans have made on our behalf. You will then be helping to pass on some of our country's heritage to your friends or those that come after you. This will help insure that these service men and women did not die in vain.