Monday is Memorial Day, and in his latest column, The Rhino takes some time out to remember and honor some of the Cleveland area athletes who sacrificed their lives for this fine country of ours. Some of the names will be familiar to some of you. Most will be familiar to not even the biggest sports buffs. Yet these men all deserve our praise and admiration more than even the biggest stars to grace this town.

Monday is Memorial Day. I'm going to spare you a soliloquy about the sacrifice that those who have given their lives in service to our country have made. I've seen a lot of cringe inducing Memorial Day tributes over the years from people like me who never got closer to combat than watching *Saving Private Ryan*, and I see no need to add to that list.

But I do see a need to remember, so that's what I'm going to do -- and because we're about sports here, the people I'm going to single out for remembrance are all Cleveland area athletes.

You may have heard of some of these people, because as you'll see in a minute, Cleveland has several grim distinctions when it comes to professional athletes in wartime service. But there are other names that aren't going to be familiar to you, no matter how big a sports trivia buff you are. These guys didn't play their games in front of 80,000 people and don't have professional sports leagues or college teams building memorials in their honor. Still, the families of every last one of them mentioned their achievements as high school athletes in their obituaries, as have the families of many other soldiers whose obituaries we've all read over the last six years. People who were once athletes want you to be remember that they were athletes, and so that's exactly what I will do.

Eddie Grant was a third baseman who broke into baseball with the Cleveland Indians in 1905. He subsequently played for the Phillies, Reds and Giants, and his

career ended in 1913. He was a 35 year-old lawyer when the United States entered World War I, but he nevertheless enlisted. In October 1918, he was killed in the Argonne Forest during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Grant was the only major leaguer killed in battle during the First World War.

Elmer Gedeon was born in Cleveland in 1917. He played football, baseball and track at The University of Michigan and made his major league baseball debut with the Washington Senators in 1939. Gedeon joined the Army Air Corps in the summer before Pearl Harbor. On April 20, 1944, the B-26 Marauder that he was piloting was shot down over France, and he was killed. He was one of only two major league players to die in World War II.

Don Steinbrunner played tackle for the Cleveland Browns in 1953. He left the Browns after his rookie year to fulfill an ROTC commitment. He decided to make the military a career, and in addition to his combat service, was an assistant coach at the Air Force Academy for five years. He was killed on July 20, 1967, when his plane was shot down over Kontun, Vietnam. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and The Purple Heart. He was one of only two professional football players to be killed in Vietnam.

Joseph Tomci played football at Stow-Munroe Falls High School, which he graduated from in 2003. He joined the United States Marine Corps after graduation, and had almost completed his second tour in Iraq when he was killed by a roadside bomb in Ramadi on August 2, 2006.

Justin Walsh was a 2001 grad of Cuyahoga Falls High School, where he played football and wrestled. His high school football coach said of him, "you don't remember all of your players, but he was one of those players that you always remember." He was a member of the United States Marine Corps, and he died on October 11, 2006, from injuries suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated while he was defusing another roadside bomb in Al-Anbar province.

Daniel Scherry played wide receiver and defensive back for Rocky River High School. He graduated from Rocky River in 2005 and joined the Marines after he graduated from the Fire Training Academy at Tri-C. He was killed in Al-Anbar province on April 16, 2007.

Norman Lane Tollett played three sports and co-captained the football team at

Elyria Catholic High School. He joined the Army in 2005 and became a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division. He was killed in a suicide bombing in Diyala province on April 23, 2007.

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.*
*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*
*At the going down of the sun and in the morning*
*We will remember them*.