

Memorial Day

by

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This Monday the nation will be celebrating Memorial Day. While this national holiday is about mourning the nation's fallen service members, for most Americans this day is the unofficial start of summer and 3-day long holiday for partying it up.

Memorial Day is supposed to be a day of reflection and remembrance of those who died while serving in our military. While its origins can be traced to the Civil War (then called Decoration Day). This day of remembrance has undergone a lot of contention and revision. Initially Memorial Day was celebrated every May 30th until Congress revised the date to the last Monday of May, creating a 3-day weekend that less of a remembrance of the dead and more of a day of leisure.

Unfortunately, like many other holidays, Memorial Day weekend has become one of sales, commerce, travel, and partying. However, two events happen each Memorial Day that cause many of us to pause for a moment. The first event is when every gravesite in our national and state military cemeteries is decorated with the American flag. The second event is the laying of the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Arlington National Cemetery. Many attendees at these events also wear a red poppy in remembrance of those fallen in war. Throughout the nation at 3:00 pm, the mournful notes of Taps can be heard.

Since the founding of our nation, Americans have fought in many wars, both abroad in forsaken lands and here on our land. There are soldiers, seamen and airmen who have died but whose remains have not been identified. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier embodies the remembrance of these unknown souls.

In **ALL** the wars we have fought, there are those who also sacrificed their lives for our freedoms but are not remembered on Memorial Day. These are the people who "worked behind the scenes," the ones, though not holding any military rank, who died in service to our nation. These are the FBI and Secret Service agents who infiltrated clandestine enemy cells embedded among our population. These are also the intelligence agents (OSS, CIA, Homeland Security, etc.) who worked behind enemy lines to safeguard our soldier and nation. We owe a debt to these unknown men and women as well on this and every Memorial Day.