

Memorial Day. Celebrate It Right!



As soon as most people hear "Memorial Day", they automatically think of the beginning of summer. Visions of cook-outs, family picnics and trips to the lake or beach fill their heads. Blockbuster movies are released by Hollywood because the weekend has become a goldmine of movie-goers. Most people get a 3-day weekend and if you're a fashion guru, you can break out the white clothes again. In other words, it's a day of celebration.

In some ways that's OK. As long as you're celebrating the lives of the people who died so that you could have those picnics and raise your family in peace and safety, then you're doing it right; after all, those people died so that you could be happy.

However, Memorial Day is becoming increasingly less about remembering and shamefully more about getting the extra day off to party.

Memorial Day is supposed to be about remembering and

memorializing the brave, dedicated men and women who died for this country. When they enlisted or were drafted, they wrote a check, up to and including their lives, payable to the people of the United States of America.

{adinsert bph}They didn't fight for their government and many of them didn't fight for an ideal; they fought for their families and their neighbors. They fought for complete strangers. They fought so that death and destruction would stay in distant countries and not invade the precious ground that they called home.

For those who have experienced a personal loss, Memorial Day is a somber day; a day to remember a loved one that didn't make it back. For patriots, it's a day to reflect and be deeply thankful to the strangers that gave their lives so that you could live yours in peace.

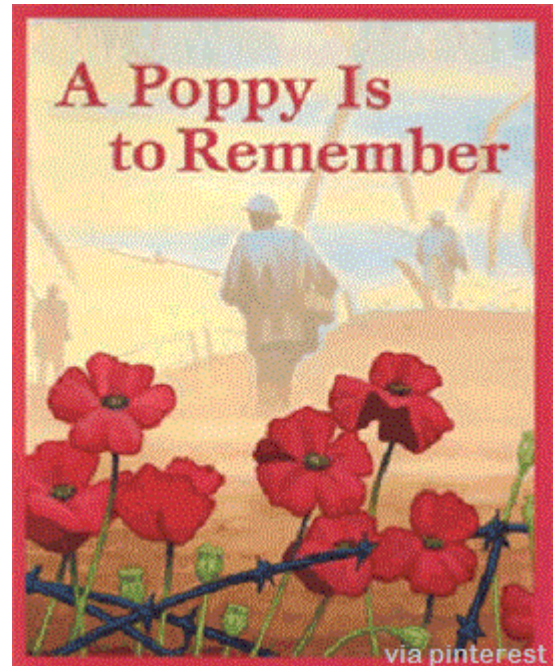
For veterans, the day is often an emotionally conflicting day. It can be fraught with sorrow and guilt. The sadness and horror of remembering the deaths of good men and women whom they fought beside leave many vets looking for a quiet place to reflect instead of looking for a crowded place to party. Some veterans feel guilt because they lived and the soldier beside them didn't, while at the same time feeling secretly relieved that it wasn't them. Such are the scars of war and they run deep.

It's understandably easier for people who have never lost a loved one or seen a fellow soldier killed to enjoy the superficial benefits of the day. Still, everybody living in this great country should take a moment to reflect.

Those people who died fighting for the people of this country aren't faceless. They aren't just names on a wall or a plaque. They were real live people. They lived, they loved, they laughed, they cried. They experienced joy and pain and they celebrated living. They were somebody's brother or sister,

mother or father or friend, and they didn't want to die.

Every single one of those soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice deserves to be remembered because without their sacrifices, there would be no holiday and there would be no freedom to celebrate. You wouldn't be able to run with your friends on the beach or take your family to the lake.



You wouldn't even be able to walk out your front door without fear of death or persecution. You wouldn't have the freedom that many so often take for granted.

Look around at your circle of friends as you barbeque or swim and ask yourself this: How many of them would be willing to jump in front of a bullet for you? How many of them would be willing to leave their families and their lives 1000's of miles behind them to fight an enemy so that you can continue to live in peace?

Not many (if any) of them, right? Well that's exactly what a complete stranger did for you.

To them, you weren't a nameless, faceless person. You were an American that they were willing to die to protect and that's exactly what they did. As you gorge yourself on hotdogs and live and laugh with your loved ones, take a minute to remember what the day is all about.

Take time to say a heartfelt "thank you" to the brave men and women who didn't make it back to eat and be happy.

Remember the people who aren't with their families today because they died so that you could be with yours.

Teach your children to remember and to be grateful, too. Teach them what Memorial Day is all about.

Celebrate Memorial Day, but do it for the right reason; do it for those who can't because they died for you.



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*This article has been written by **Theresa Crouse** for [Survivopedia](#).*