

## The History of Memorial Day

Memorial Day was first widely observed in May 1868. The celebration commemorated the sacrifices of the Civil War and the proclamation was made by General John A Logan. Following the proclamation, participants decorated graves of more than 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers.

In the years since World War 1, the day has become a celebration of honor for those who died in all America's wars, as well as those who are Veterans and current members of the US military.

In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday. The United States celebrates this holiday the last Monday of May.

President Ronald Reagan is credited with reviving the practice of honoring Memo-

rial Day and its meaning. One of his famous speeches was given at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day in 1986. It begins...

"Today is the day we put aside to remember fallen heroes and to pray that no heroes will ever have to die for us again. It's a day of thanks for the valor of others, a day to remember the splendor of America and those of her children who rest in this cemetery and others. It's a day to be with the family and remember."

He went on to talk about those buried in Arlington Cemetery - military personnel both famous and unknown, Joe Louis, Audie Murphie, two space shuttle Challenger astronauts, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and so many more. He went on to say...

"All of these men were different, but they shared this in common: They loved America very much; they stood for something.

Look up the full speech, it was a great one.

Does Memorial Day have meaning to you? Many communities around the United States have memorial day events at cemeteries where veterans and spiritual leaders speak. Other cities and towns host parades to honor the military. However, in many cities around the country, these events have been forgotten.

It is important for Americans to take time to remember the sacrifices that bought their freedom. Here are some ideas on how to celebrate this important American holiday:

- Send a note or verbally thank Veterans you know.
- If you know someone who has lost a loved one in battle, offer to help with a household project or help meet a special need they have.
- Visit a local cemetery and place flags or flowers on the graves of fallen soldiers.
- Visit local monuments to military service.
- Fly the American flag at half-staff until noon.
- Participate in the National Moment of Remembrance at 3:00 pm. Pause and think upon the meaning of Memorial Day.
- Pray for God's blessing on America. Ask for His protection over all branches of our military.



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