

Many Americans think of Memorial Day as just another day off, but the roots of this holiday dig further into history than people imagine. Memorial Day is not just for those who have lost someone they knew in Afghanistan recently, or the tombstones in a graveyard dedicated to the Civil War; it lives within all of us. The rich past associated with Memorial Day, the numerous brave soldiers lost in the wars, and the way it unites and inspires us as a country is what Memorial Day is all about.

To start, the birth of Memorial Day dates after the bloody American Civil War on May 30, 1868. Though originally recognized as Decoration Day, family members still honored the deceased by arranging flowers and other garnishes on the graves in memory of their noble loved ones. The first Decoration Day was a huge event consisting of about twenty thousand decorated graves involving five thousand participants. Finally, in 1971, "Decoration Day" was officially named a federal holiday on the last Monday in May known as Memorial Day. When exposed to the unique and significant past, it adds to the passion felt in the hearts of Americans toward Memorial Day.

Not often are numbers frightening, but when describing a quantity of innocent American lives taken during war, the number 1,264,000 is bone-chilling. In a perfect world, we would all live until we died of old age, but the world we actually live in consists of war, shootings, and torture. It is because of these elements that good-hearted people fall dead before their time of horrid and ghastly causes. Of course, nobody wishes for these tragedies, but unfortunately there is no way to undo the damage done on the battlefields. Therefore, we honor their memories to give back for their services. Without these men, our country would possibly not exist, so they all deserve our respect on their very special day: Memorial Day.

Sadly, throughout the United States, the value of Memorial Day varies greatly. To illustrate, given a twenty-year-old who was never known anybody to fight in a war and an older veteran who has suffered the loss of a close friend in war, the latter would clearly feel more passionate about the day. However, the joy and love of Memorial Day is ready to be felt at the jumpstart of a little recognition. Learning more about war history and every sacrifice made willingly for the freedom of this country creates greater sentimental value, and realizing how little we might be giving compared to the soldiers giving their lives will unveil any ignorance in a form of immense honor and respect.

Overall, Memorial Day is more than just another day for a cookout, for it is truly a day of appreciation, gratitude, and strength celebrated in unity throughout America. The dedication to this day is a patriotic spark found inside all Americans that can be ignited into a blaze of powerful emotions; we simply just need to light the fire. The integrity of the symbolic origin, the countless lives of loved ones taken, and its inspirational messages to the people is the true meaning of Memorial Day.

Sources

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