

A Day of Remembrance

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Memorial Day – a day to go to the beach, have a picnic, invite friends and family over for a barbecue. Wait, doesn't Memorial Day have another meaning?

Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day. It was a day for honoring those who gave their lives in the U.S. Civil War by decorating their graves. There are many stories about its actual beginning; over two dozen cities and towns have claimed to be the birthplace of Memorial Day. While Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day. Since its official beginning in 1868 it has been an annual event when businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

In 1915, Moina Michael, inspired by the poem "In Flanders Fields," conceived the idea to wear red poppies on Memorial Day in honor of those who served the nation during war. After World War I, Memorial Day observations began to honor those who had died in all United States' wars, not just the Civil War.

Today, Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May. A ceremony is held at the Arlington National Cemetery where a small U.S. flag is placed on each grave and a wreath is laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

How can we observe Memorial Day?

- ✓ Visit a cemetery and place flags or flowers on the graves of soldiers.
- ✓ Visit memorials for our soldiers.
- ✓ Fly the U.S. Flag at half – staff until noon.
- ✓ Fly the 'POW/MIA' Flag.
- ✓ Participate in the "National Moment of Remembrance" at 3 p.m. Pause a moment to honor soldiers and disabled veterans.
- ✓ Wear a red poppy.

This is a wonderful country that we live in and we have many opportunities that others do not have. We should all try to remember that our freedom has come at a price and we should take the time to honor those who sacrificed in order for us to enjoy this country.

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