

CIVIL AIR PATROL – ARUNDEL COMPOSITE SQUADRON

MER-MD-023 (<http://arundel.mdwg.cap.gov>)

May 2005

SAFETY

MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day – History, Meaning and Safety

Poem by Sir Walter Scott

“Soldier, rest! Thy warfare o’er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.”



History of Memorial Day

- Originally called Decoration Day – a day of remembrance for those who died in our nation’s service
- Waterloo, N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966
- Historians believe that several communities began practicing similar Memorial Day traditions at about the same time in the 1860’s
- Memorial Day (originally called Decoration Day) was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 by General John Logan, National Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic



General John A. Logan, National Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, 1868

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- It was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery (soldiers who died in the Civil War – the Civil War began in 1861 and ended in 1865)
- The South refused to acknowledge Memorial Day until after World War I. The Southern States honored their dead on separate days.
- In 1882, the Decoration Day was renamed to Memorial Day by the Grand Army of the Republic
- The tradition to wear red poppies on Memorial Day to honor those who died serving our nation during wars was started by Moina Michaels in 1915
- Poem by Moina Michaels:

“We cherish too, the Poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led,
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies.”



In 1948, the U.S. Post Office honored Ms. Michael for her role in founding the National Poppy movement by issuing a red 3-cent postage stamp with her likeness on it

- In 1971, President Richard Nixon declared Memorial Day a national holiday, and since then, it has been observed on the last Monday in May
- In 2004, those who have died fighting for this nation in the global war on terrorism, have been included in the remembrance

Memorial Day and Veterans Day

The two national Holidays, Memorial Day and Veterans Day, honor the sacrifice of Americans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces and celebrate the people who served and the values Americans hold as a nation: **Duty**, **Honor**, and **Civic Responsibility**.

Memorial Day – remembers those who gave their lives in wars in our nation’s service
Observed during the last Monday in May

Veterans Day – honors all who served in the U.S. Armed Forces
Observed on the 2nd Monday in November

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Meaning of Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a holiday that commemorates those who have died in battle while serving in the U.S. armed forces.

“... gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with choicest flowers of springtime Let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us as sacred charges upon the Nation’s gratitude, the soldier’s and sailor’s widow and orphan.” -

- General John Logan, General Order No. 11, May 5, 1868

The “Memorial” in Memorial Day has been ignored by too many of us who are beneficiaries of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice. Often we do not observe the day as it should be, a day where we actively remember our ancestors, our family members, our loved ones, our neighbors, and our friends who have given the ultimate sacrifice.



Observe Memorial Day by

- Visiting cemeteries and placing flags or flowers on the graves of our fallen heroes
- Visiting memorials
- Flying the U.S. Flag at half-staff until noon
- Participating in a “National Moment of Remembrance” at 3 P.M. to pause and think upon the true meaning of the day, or listening to Taps being played
- Renewing a pledge to aid the widows, widowers, and orphans of our fallen dead, and to aid the disabled veterans

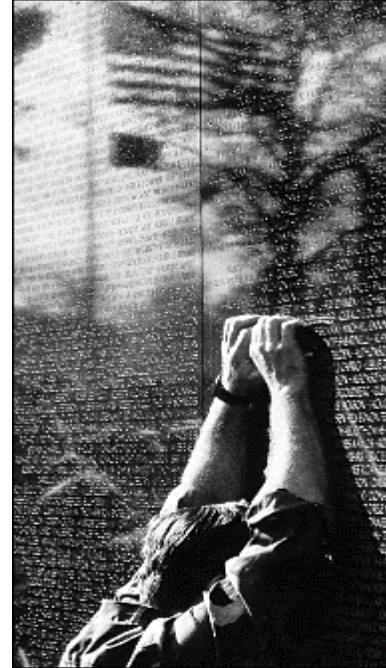


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Memorial Day is not to honor war, but those who died in those wars

On military bases, soldiers fire rifles into the air to honor their lost comrades. In remembrance of those who died at sea, Navy sailors toss flowers into the ocean. At some U.S. ports, it is common to see miniature ships filled with flowers floating on the water. Veterans and volunteers sell small red artificial flowers called poppies to raise funds for disabled veterans. Across the nation, the American flag flies at half-mast until noon.

Since the late 1950's, on the Thursday before Memorial Day, the U.S. Army has placed small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery. The Army also stands guard in the cemetery through Memorial Day to ensure that the flags remain in place.



United States War Casualties

WAR	NUMBER SERVING	WOUNDED	BATTLE DEATHS
Revolutionary War	217,000	6,188	4,435
War of 1812	286,730	4,505	2,260
Mexican War	78,718	4,152	1,733
Civil War	3,213,363	354,805	191,963
Spanish American War	306,760	1,662	385
World War I	4,734,991	204,002	53,402
World War II	16,112,566	671,846	291,557
Korean Conflict	5,720,000	103,284	33,741
Vietnam Conflict	8,744,000	153,303	47,424
Persian Gulf War	2,225,000	467	147

Memorial Day Safety

The Memorial Day Holiday generally marks the beginning of the Summer Season. The days between Memorial Day and Labor Day, sometimes referred to as the "101 Critical Days of Summer", is a period of increased injuries (including off-duty injuries for the military), caused by increased activity and risk taking.

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For example, over the last five years, the Air Force has lost an average of 21 members during summer. Of those off-duty fatalities, approximately 70% was in the 18-25 year old age group. The most significant loss of life among the Air Force members involved private motor vehicles. Motorcycle mishaps accounted for about one-third of the fatal motor vehicle accidents. Safety officials offered the following factors to consider when planning summer travel:

- Wear seatbelts
- Remain alert while at the wheel and plan rest breaks at frequent intervals
- Do not speed in an effort to arrive early – it is better to arrive late than not to arrive at all
- Do not drink alcohol and drive
- Anticipate the unexpected and be ready to react; pay particular attention to your surroundings

All of these are common sense precautions for summer travel.

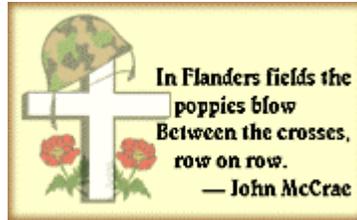
In another example, the American Red Cross indicates that drowning is the 2nd leading cause of death from unintentional injuries for the 5-24 year old age group. Again, common sense precautions can save lives: Think before you enter the water; know your capabilities; do not try to out swim someone who is a much better swimmer than you. The American Red Cross Water Safety tips include:

- Parents, guardians, do not take your eyes off small children. Know where they are at all times when around water.
- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim.
- Always swim with a buddy. Never swim alone.
- Know your swimming limits and stay within them. Do not try to keep up with a stronger skilled swimmer or encourage others to keep up with you.
- Swim in supervised areas only.
- Obey “No Diving” signs that indicate the area is unsafe for headfirst entries. Enter feet-first into the water rather than headfirst if you do not know the depth. In addition, learn the correct way to dive from a qualified instructor.
- Watch out for the “dangerous too’s” – too tired; too cold; too far from safety; too much sun; too much strenuous activity.
- Do not chew gum or eat while you swim. You could easily choke.
- Use common sense about swimming after eating. In general, you do not have to wait an hour after eating, before you can safely swim. However, if you had a large meal, it is wise to let digestion get started before doing strenuous swimming.
- Alcohol and swimming do not mix. Alcohol impairs your judgement, balance and coordination, especially in water. It affects your swimming and diving skills and reduces your body’s ability to stay warm.
- Always wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket when boating and fishing.

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- Know your local weather conditions and prepare for electrical storms. Because water conducts electricity, it is wise to stop swimming or boating as soon as you hear or see a storm approaching.

.... But much more about Summer Safety in the next Safety Brief



For Memorial Day, remember to

- Honor the soldiers who gave their lives in war for the peace that we now enjoy
- Have fun with your family during the holiday, and
- Start thinking about Summer Safety

Read More.....References:

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3. <http://www.usmemorialday.org>
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8. <http://www.kpcnews.com>
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1. Department of Defense, <http://www.greatwar.co.uk>
2. LibrarySpot. StartSpot Mediaworks, Inc. Evanston, IL <http://www.libraryspot.com>