

# 5 interesting facts about Memorial Day

Memorial Day is celebrated at the end of May each year to honor those who lost their lives while serving in the Armed Forces. Memorial Day, the origins of which can be traced to the aftermath of the American Civil War, holds deep historical significance, and the following are five interesting facts about the holiday.

1. The holiday began as Decoration Day. Before the official establishment of Memorial Day, communities began holding spring tributes to fallen soldiers, decorating soldiers' graves with flowers to pay respects. In 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for northern Civil War veterans, officially proclaimed May 30 as Decoration Day. War.gov says that graves at Arlington National Cemetery continued to be adorned in the same fashion they were back in the 1860s.
2. Memorial Day became an official holiday in 1968. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Memorial Day into law on June 28, 1968, officially marking Memorial Day as a national holiday. However, two years prior, he signed a proclamation officially declaring Waterloo, New York, as the birthplace of Memorial Day. The town was the first to honor fallen soldiers, and has been featuring a formal, community-wide event since May 5, 1866.
3. Blooming flowers have a place in Memorial Day history. Historians believe that the original choice of May 30 for Decoration Day was not due to any specific battle. Rather, it was a day when no particular conflict had taken place and was the time of year when flowers would be in full bloom. So on May 30 there would be plenty of flowers across the country to decorate soldiers' graves.
4. All fallen veterans were eventually honored on Memorial Day. Many early Memorial Day iterations honored those who died during the American Civil War. After World War I, however, the Memorial Day holiday was expanded to honor all American military personnel who died during any war.
5. The Uniform Monday Holiday Act changed when Memorial Day is commemorated. Memorial Day once was commemorated on May 30 regardless of the day of the week. In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, moving Memorial Day to the last Monday in May to create a three-day weekend for federal employees. This change went into effect in 1971.

# Honor Veterans this Memorial Day

Memorial Day often is celebrated with the excitement of a long weekend and the prospect of firing up the grill for a backyard barbecue. But Memorial Day also is a time to reflect on the men and women who gave their lives to defend American freedom.

Memorial Day was established to honor individuals who died while serving the United States in the Armed Forces. Memorial Day is a time to reflect on the sacrifices of the fallen heroes who dedicated and lost their lives in the pursuit of service. The following are some ways to honor those sacrifices this Memorial Day.

- Observe the National Moment of Remembrance. The National Moment of Remembrance is an annual one-minute moment of silence that takes place at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day. Established by Congress in 2000, this unifying moment encourages Americans to pause their activities and reflect on the high cost of freedom. The time is significant, as it is a period when most people are enjoying Memorial Day festivities that were made possible by the sacrifices

of Armed Forces personnel.

- Honor the American flag. Memorial Day features a unique flag protocol. To properly honor the fallen, the flag should be flown at half-staff until noon. Afterwards, it should be raised to the top of the staff for the remainder of the day, according to the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization. The transition marks the nation's mourning in the morning hours



## Did you know?

According to the Department of Defense (DOD), the United States Armed Forces had 1.33 million people identified as active troops as of 2025. The DOD reported that an additional 770,118 people were serving in the National Guard or as reserves as of 2025. Active-duty Armed Forces personnel in the United States are spread across six main service branches: the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and the Space Force. As of December 2025, the Army had more active-duty troops (447,455) than any other branch of the American military. The Navy (339,602) had the second most active-duty troops, while the Air Force (315,317) was the third largest branch in terms of active-duty troops.

and then the legacy of fallen veterans later in the afternoon.

- Coordinate flag placement for cemeteries. Organizations like Flags for Fallen Vets and scouting groups make an effort to place small American flags at the grave sites of deceased veterans. Many cemeteries feature sections exclusively for veterans. Similarly, families can visit cemeteries and leave a penny or a stone on the headstone of a veteran, which shows others that someone visited to pay their respects.
- Talk to the next generation. To ensure that the memories of

fallen soldiers do not fade into obscurity, living veterans can speak with youth about their service experiences and those of their fallen friends. Schools or local municipalities can organize speaking engagements.

Memorial Day is much more than sales at the furniture store or a day spent manning the grill. It is a day to remember and honor service members who never made it home to see their great country again. Ensuring that their efforts are remembered, and giving thanks to all veterans, is a great way to commemorate Memorial Day.



## We Will Never Forget: Freedom Is Not Free

Today we pay tribute to the brave military veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. We are forever grateful for their service, and we will always honor their memories.

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## Buford Battlefield Memorial Program

**Saturday May 23<sup>rd</sup> 10:30 am**  
262 Rocky River Road Lancaster, SC



The Friends of the Buford Massacre Battlefield will host its annual Memorial Day Program at 11:30 am, immediately following the Sons of the American Revolution commemoration, which begins at 10:30 am.

Speakers include the Daughters of the American Revolution State Regent, State Representative Brandon Newton, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars State Commander.

Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, insect repellent, sunscreen and water for their comfort, as the program is outdoors.



## Happy Memorial Day



## Home of the Free, Thanks to the Brave

We salute the men and women of our military, both past and present, who sacrifice so much to protect our freedom and way of life.

Happy Memorial Day, and God Bless America!

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## To Our Brave Soldiers Past & Present, Thank You for Your Service & Sacrifice

Please join us in taking a moment of silence to remember and honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, and the loved ones they have left behind.



Monday - Friday 8am - 6 pm  
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Today we pay tribute to the brave military veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. We are forever grateful for their service, and we will always honor their memories.



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## Remembering Their Service & Sacrifice

In memory of many and in honor of all, we proudly salute our nation's veterans this Memorial Day.

