

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.

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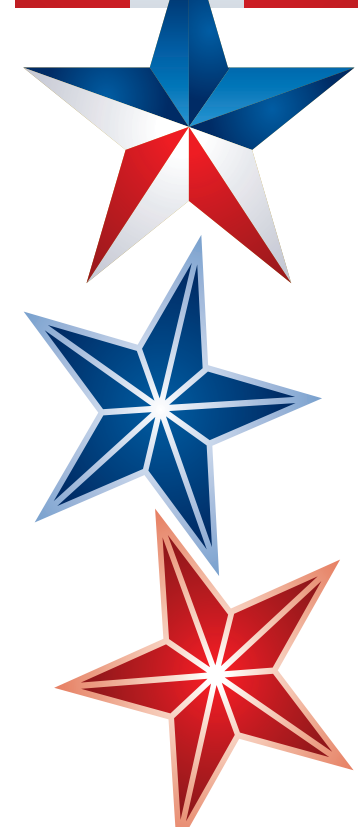
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