

MEMORIAL DAY

Last Monday in May

This American holiday serves as a time to remember and honor those who died in active military service to our country. The mission of Memorial Day is “to reach out in support of all the soldiers and their families who have sacrificed so much for us.”

ORIGIN

Memorial Day began as a Civil War holiday called Decoration Day, honoring and remembering the 750,000 Union and Confederate soldiers who laid down their lives fighting in the Civil War, by decorating their graves with flowers, wreaths and flags. In the early days there were scattered celebrations in small towns, where people would gather at cemeteries, decorate the graves, then listen to speeches or sermons, sing songs, or march in parades.

But the holiday did not become widely prominent until, in 1868, General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic (an organization of Civil War veterans), declared May 30th Decoration Day, stating it was “designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion...”

Few ex-Confederate Southerners recognized this holiday, since it was initiated and considered more of a celebration for Union soldiers and the Union cause. Southern states would hold their own Confederate Decoration Day. (To this day, several southern states recognize an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead.)

Over time, the name of the holiday changed from Decoration Day to Memorial Day, to signify that the act of memorializing is greater than simply decorating the graves of the fallen. After World War I the meaning of the holiday shifted from remembering those who died in the Civil War to honoring all of America’s war dead, so many Southern states began to observe Memorial Day as well. In 1968, one hundred years after the first national Decoration Day, Congress finally declared Memorial Day a national holiday.

On that first Decoration Day, General James Garfield gave a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, after which the 5000 people in attendance decorated the graves of 20,000 Northern and Southern soldiers buried there.

“We do not know one promise these men made, one pledge they gave, one word they spoke; but we do know they summed up and perfected, by one supreme act, the highest virtues of men and citizens. For love of country they accepted death, and thus resolved all doubts, and made immortal their patriotism and their virtue.”

James A. Garfield
May 30, 1868, Arlington
National Cemetery



TIMELINE

1868 General John A. Logan declares May 30th Decoration Day. General James Garfield gives a speech at Arlington National Cemetery.

1873 New York becomes the first state to officially observe Decoration Day on May 30.



1884 Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. gives a Memorial Day Address which becomes one of the most quoted Memorial Day speeches ever given.

“The generation that carried on the war has been set apart by its experience. Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire. It was given to us to learn at the outset that life is a profound and passionate thing... Year after year the comrades of the dead follow, with public honor, procession and commemorative flags and funeral march—honor and grief from us who stand almost alone, and have seen the best and noblest of our generation pass away.”

~ Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., May 30, 1884, Keene, New Hampshire

1890 By this year, all Northern states have made Decoration Day an official state holiday.

1915 Poet John McRae writes *In Flanders Fields*, and poppies become a popular symbol of remembrance.

1966 Congress resolves to officially recognize Waterloo, New York as the birthplace of the Memorial Day holiday; however, it remains in debate as many cities claim to be the first to celebrate it.

1968 Congress declares Memorial Day a national holiday.

1971 The National Holiday Act goes into effect, establishing Memorial Day as a federal holiday and moving it to the last Monday in May.

2000 The “National Moment of Remembrance” resolution is passed, which asks Americans to set aside 3 pm local time on Memorial Day to “voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to *Taps*.”

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY

BY
FRANCIS MILES FINCH
(1827-1907)

By the flow of the inland river,
Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of the grave-grass quiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the one, the Blue,
Under the other, the Gray

These in the robes of glory,
Those in the gloom of defeat,
All with the battle-blood gory,
In the dusk of eternity meet:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgement-day
Under the laurel, the Blue,
Under the willow, the Gray.

*this poem is about
the origins of
Memorial day*

*This poem reflects
Memorial Day's shift
to include all wars*

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky,
The larks, still bravely singing, fly,
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead; short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe!
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high!
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

BY
JOHN MCCRAE // 1872-1918

From the silence of sorrowful hours
The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
Alike for the friend and the foe;
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgement-day;
Under the roses, the Blue,
Under the lilies, the Gray.

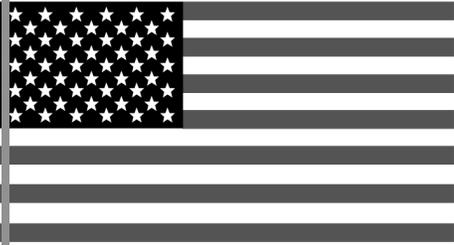
So with an equal splendor,
The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
On the blossoms blooming for all:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Brodered with gold, the Blue,
Mellowed with gold, the Gray.

So, when the summer calleth,
On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
The cooling drip of the rain:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment -day,
Wet with the rain, the Blue
Wet with the rain, the Gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
The generous deed was done,
In the storm of the years that are fading
No braver battle was won:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the blossoms, the Blue,
Under the garlands, the Gray

No more shall the war cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever
When they laurel the graves of our dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day,
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray.

WAYS MEMORIAL DAY IS OBSERVED



Traditional observances of Memorial day have diminished over the years and many Americans have forgotten the meaning and traditions of this day. Here are a few:

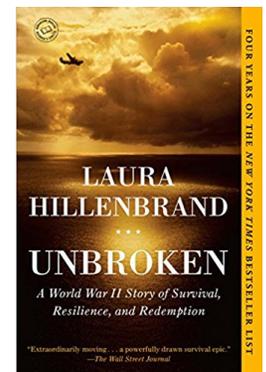
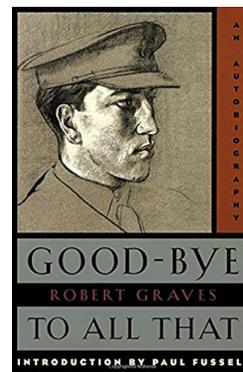
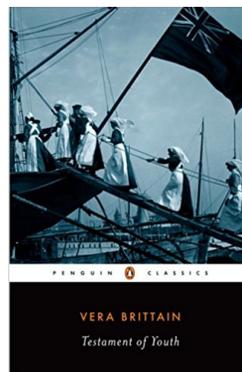
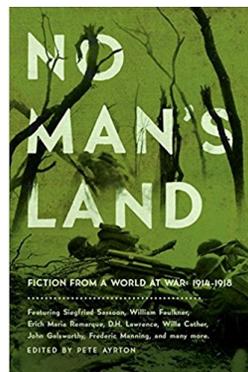
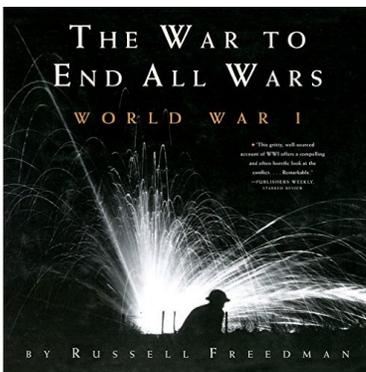
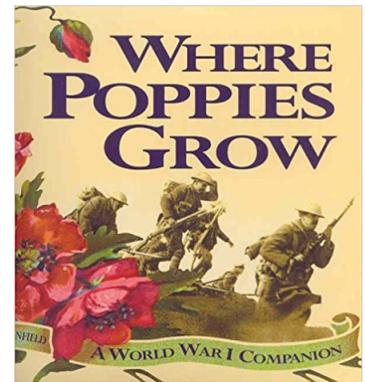
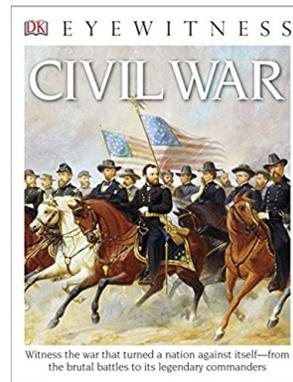
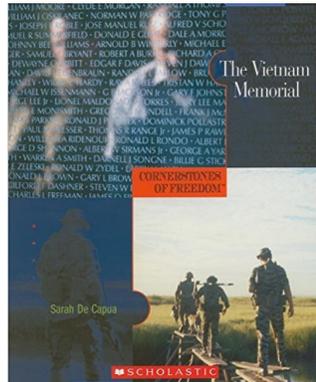
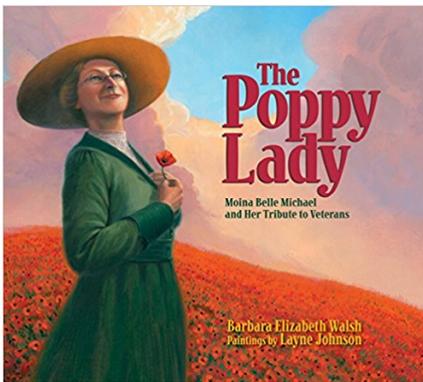
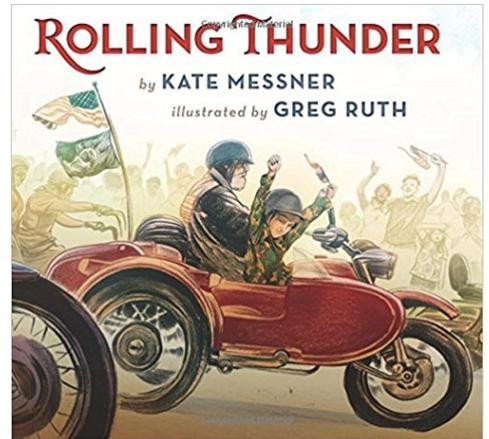
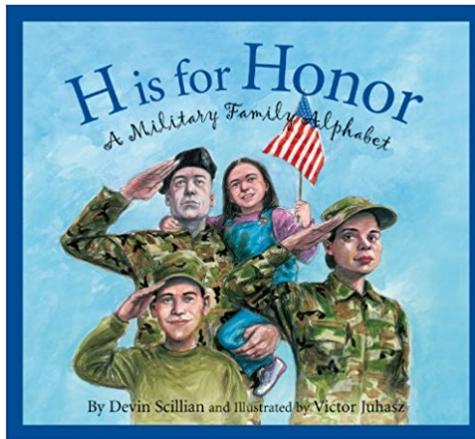
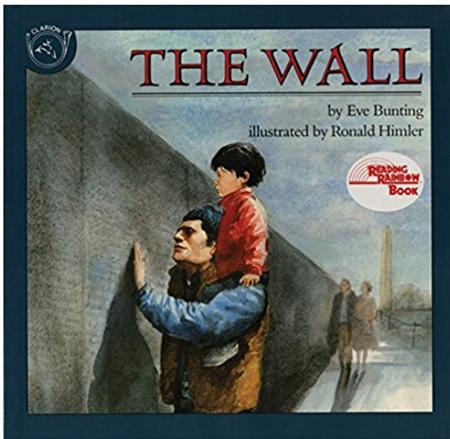
- Traditionally, the US flag is raised for a moment to the top of the staff, and then solemnly lowered to the half-staff position, where it remains until noon. In this way the more than 1,000,000 men and women who gave their lives in service to their country are remembered. Then the flag is raised to full-staff for the rest of the day, symbolizing that their memory is raised by the living, who rise up and continue to fight for liberty and justice.
- Across the United States, Memorial Day parades are held each year, incorporating veterans and military personnel.
- Americans visit cemeteries and memorials on this day, placing flags or flowers on the graves of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation.
- Some people visit Local Veterans' Homes and Hospitals on this day, to let them know that we appreciate their sacrifice and that of their families and friends who died in battle. They may bring cookies, books, or movies to share.
- The tradition of wearing Memorial Day Poppies, which was inspired by the 1915 poem *In Flanders Fields* by John McRea, began with war worker Moina Michael, who pledged to always wear red silk poppies as a symbol of "keeping the faith with all who died." Many others have adopted this practice, not only in the US, but in more than 50 other countries.
- At Arlington National Cemetery, Memorial Day rituals are strictly upheld: American flags are placed at each of the more than 260,000 graves and soldiers patrol day and night through the weekend to make sure the flags stay upright. Traditionally, the President or Vice President gives a speech on Memorial Day and lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. About 5000 people attend the ceremony.
- Americans are asked to observe a "National Moment of Remembrance" at 3 pm local time – a moment of silent reflection to honor the fallen.



take a moment to honor and reflect on the many fatalities from U.S. wars and conflicts

American Revolution (1775-1783)	4,435	World War II (1941-1945)	405,399
War of 1812 (1812-1815)	2,260	Korean War (1950-1953)	36,574
Mexican War (1846-1848)	13,283	Vietnam War (1964-1975)	58,220
Civil War (1861-1865)	750,000	Gulf War (1990-1991)	383
Spanish-American War (1898-1902)	385	Afghanistan War (2001-present)	2,381
World War I (1917-1918)	116,516	Iraq War (2003-2012)	4,500

A Small Selection of Books



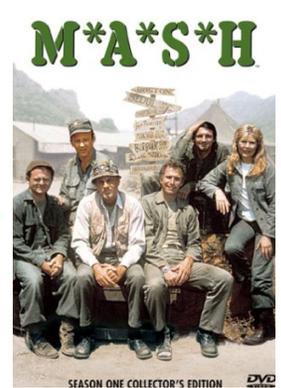
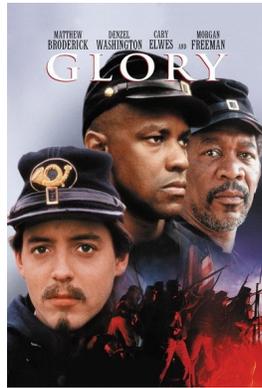
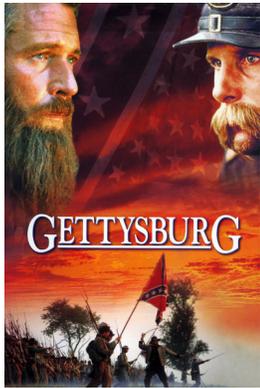
SEE NEXT PAGE FOR DETAILS

NOTE: Several of the following books, movies, and TV shows are repeated from the Veterans Day resource guide, since there is clearly much overlap between the two holidays. However, we've also included a few additional Memorial Day books and videos here.

A Small Selection of Books

Title	Author	Level
<u>The Wall</u>	Even Bunting	K-Int
<u>Memorial Day (Rookie Read-About Holidays)</u>	Jacqueline S. Cotton	K-Int
<u>H is for Honor</u>	Devin Scillian	K-Int
<u>A Poppy is to Remember</u>	Heather Patterson	K-Int
<u>Rolling Thunder</u>	Kate Messner	K-Int
<u>Let's Celebrate Memorial Day (Holidays & Heroes)</u>	Barbara deRubertis	Pri-Int
<u>America's White Table</u>	Margot Theis Raven	Pri-Int and older
<u>The Poppy Lady</u>	Barbara Walsh	Pri-Int
<u>The Vietnam Memorial (Cornerstones of Freedom)</u>	Sarah De Capua	Int-LMS
<u>DK Eyewitness Books: Civil War</u>	DK	Int-UMS
<u>DK Eyewitness Books: World War I</u>	DK	Int-UMS
<u>DK Eyewitness Books: World War II</u>	DK	Int-UMS
<u>World War II: Visual Encyclopedia</u>	DK	Int-UMS
<u>In Flanders Fields</u>	McCrae & Granfield	LMS-UMS
<u>Where Poppies Grow: A WW1 Companion</u>	Linda Granfield	LMS-UMS and older
<u>The Unknown Soldier</u>	Linda Granfield	LMS-UMS and older
<u>The War to End All Wars: World War 1</u>	Russell Freedman	LMS-UMS and older
<u>No Man's Land: Fiction From World at War</u>	Pete Ayrton	HS-Adult
<u>A World Undone-The Story of the Great War</u>	G. J. Meyer	HS-Adult
<u>Testament of Youth</u>	Vera Brittain	HS-Adult
<u>Goodbye to All That: An Autobiography</u>	Robert Graves	HS-Adult
<u>Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption</u>	Laura Hillenbrand	HS-Adult

MOVIES AND TELEVISION



- ★ *Ken Burns: The Civil War* (documentary series on Netflix; rated TV-PG; 1990)
- ★ *Civil War 360* (documentary series on Netflix; rated TV-PG; 2013)
- ★ *Gettysburg* (Civil War; rated PG; 1993)
- ★ *The Red Badge of Courage* (Civil War; NR; 1951)
- ★ *Glory* (Civil War; rated R; 1989)
- ★ *Apocalypse WWI* (documentary series; 2014)
- ★ *Our World War* (BBC dramatic presentation of true stories from WWI; 2014)
- ★ *All Quiet on the Western Front* (WWI; there is a 1930 movie and a 1979 TV movie)
- ★ *War Horse* (WWI; rated PG-13; 2011)
- ★ *Private Peaceful* (WWI; NR; 2012)
- ★ *Band of Brothers* (HBO series of E Company, 506th Regiment of 101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army, WWII; 2001)
- ★ *Saving Private Ryan* (WWII; rated R; 1998)
- ★ *Patton* (WWII; rated PG; 1970)
- ★ *The Longest Day* (D-Day, WWII; 1962)
- ★ *Memorial Day* (WWII; rated R; 2012)
- ★ *Letters From Iwo Jima* (WWII; rated R; 2006)
- ★ *Unbroken* (WWII; rated PG-13; 2014)
- ★ *My Boy Jack* (BBC movie about Rudyard Kipling looking for his MIA son during WWI; 2007)
- ★ *M*A*S*H* (Korean conflict; film made in 1970, television series produced 1972-1983)
- ★ *We Were Soldiers* (Vietnam; rated R; 2002)

and more!

Turner Classic Movies Memorial Day Marathon list:

<http://www.tcm.com/this-month/article/983513%7C983524/72-Hour-Memorial-Day-Marathon.html>

Memorial Day videos from History.com:

<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/memorial-day-history/videos>

Memorial Day videos from Watch Know Learn:

<http://watchknowlearn.org/SearchResults.aspx?SearchText=memorial+day>

*Live from the Nation's Capital: The National Memorial Day Concert – check here on Sunday,

May 28th, 2017 at 8 pm ET:

<http://www.pbs.org/national-memorial-day-concert/home/>

Other videos from the National Memorial Day

Concert website:

<http://www.pbs.org/national-memorial-day-concert/media/videos/>

links

Multiple ages:

Memorial Day Photo Gallery:

<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/memorial-day-history/pictures/memorial-day/birthplace-of-memorial-day>

Memorial Day puzzles, coloring pages and worksheets from The Holiday Zone:

<http://www.theholidayzone.com/memorial/printable.html>

Memorial Day themed activity pages:

https://www.bigactivities.com/coloring/memorial_day/index.php

Making Memorial Day Memories: 10 End-of-Year Friendly Ideas from Scholastic:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/meghan-everette/making-memorial-day-memories-10-end-year-friendly-ideas/>

Memorial Day activities on Pinterest:

<https://www.pinterest.com/explore/memorial-day-activities/>

Memorial Day Lesson Ideas and Resources:

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/memorialday-lesson-ideas.html>

Send a letter to a soldier:

http://amillionthanks.org/send_a_letter.php

Preschool through Kindergarten

Memorial Day Preschool Cutting Practice:

<http://3boysandadog.com/memorial-day-preschool-cutting-practice/>

Memorial Day Penmanship Practice:

<http://www.schoolingamonkey.com/product/memorial-day-penmanship-worksheet/>

Memorial Day Coloring Pages:

<http://www.patrioticcoloringpages.com/memorial-day/>

Memorial Day Dot Marker Printables:

<http://www.freehomeschooldeals.com/free-memorial-day-dot-marker-printable-set/>

6 Quick Projects for a Meaningful Memorial Day from Scholastic:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/allie-magnuson/6-quick-projects-meaningful-memorial-day/>

Primary through Intermediate

Memorial Day crafts and projects from Enchanted Learning:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/memorialday/>

5 Easy Poppy Crafts for Kids:

<http://happyhooligans.ca/easy-poppy-crafts-for-kids/>

7 Children's Games for Memorial Day:

<http://toysinthedryer.com/7-childrens-games-for-your-memorial-day-party/>

links continued

Intermediate through Lower Middle School:

History of Memorial Day Scavenger Hunt:

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/hunt/hunt036.shtml

Online Memorial Day Crossword Puzzle:

http://www.abcya.com/memorial_day_crossword_puzzle.htm

Memorial Day puzzles:

<http://www.imom.com/3-puzzling-memorial-day-games-for-kids/#.WRXzhRPytE4>

How to draw a soldier:

<https://www.artforkidshub.com/draw-soldier/>

Upper Middle School, High School, and Adult:

Memorial Day Address of Oliver Wendell Holmes – entire speech can be found here:

<https://www.legion.org/magazine/226883/why-memorial-day>

Fact Sheet on America's Wars:

https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf

Memorial Day resources from the US Department of Veterans Affairs – including flag display guidelines, info about the poppy, and Taps:

<https://www.va.gov/opa/speceven/memday/>

Memorial Day Infographics:

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/51904.htm>

The Taps Bugler:

<http://tapsbugler.com/>

Memorial Websites:

[The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier](#)

[WWI Museum and Memorial](#)

[World War II Memorial](#)

[National D-Day Memorial](#)

[Korean War Memorial](#)

[Vietnam Memorial](#)

[Vietnam Women's Memorial](#)

[US Marine Corps War Memorial](#)

parents:

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR OWN
DETERMINATIONS ABOUT
AGE APPROPRIATE
MATERIALS.
COMMON SENSE MEDIA
IS A GREAT ONLINE
RESOURCE FOR THIS.**