

# Memorial Day

The United States of America honors the nation's armed services



personnel killed protecting our homeland on the last Monday of May. The original name of Memorial Day, Decoration Day, was established on the order of General John Alexander Logan for the purpose of decorating graves of the American Civil War dead. The first official observance was on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

There is evidence that women's groups in the South decorated graves before the end of the Civil War. A hymn published in 1867, "Kneel Where Our Loves are Sleeping" by Nella L. Sweet carried the dedication "To The Ladies of the South who are Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead" (Duke University's Historic American Sheet Music, 1850-1920). Decoration Day was observed until 1971, when most states changed to a federal schedule of Memorial Day observance.



*...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-



Ceremonial procession at the Alabama National Cemetery (ALNC).  
Photo taken during Wreaths Across America, another time of decoration.



Decorated graves at the ALNC.



American Village.

#### Ideas for observance:

- ◆ National Moment of Remembrance at 3 p.m. local time
- ◆ Decorate graves of veterans with flowers and/or flags
- ◆ Display the U.S. Flag
- ◆ Watch a movie about sacrifice
- ◆ Visit a memorial and/or ceremony
- ◆ Listen to “Taps”
- ◆ Remember deceased or missing loved ones in prayer





A school rifle drill team member bows during a Memorial Day ceremony in Tuscumbia, Alabama (Associated Press photo).



This military service ceremony at Auburn University included a special "9/11" memorial tribute, 2003.



Col. Stretch Dunn (USA Retired), Lt. General Hal Moore (USA Retired), Mayor of Auburn Bill Ham, and Dr. David Dyson prior to the Mayor's Memorial Day Breakfast 2003, Auburn Conference Center, at which LTG Moore received the Distinguished Veteran Award.



Soldiers guard and pay their respects on Memorial Day and every other day at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, DC.





Patriot Guard Riders attend funerals of active military, veterans, firefighters, and law enforcement personnel (invited by families).



Alabama National Cemetery Memorial Day Wreath Laying Ceremony.



Col. Bob Barefield (U.S. Army Retired), Chairman, Patriotism in Action, and Chairman, Support Committee for Alabama National Cemetery, presides over the first Memorial Day ceremony at the new cemetery.



Vietnam Veteran.



LTC Glenn Nivens  
USA Infantry (Ret),  
Patriotism in Action and  
Blue Star Salute Foundation.



Stretch Dunn sings at Memorial Day at the Alabama National Cemetery.



Marynell Winslow, President of the Alabama Department of American Gold Star Mothers at the Alabama National Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony. Ryan, son of George and Marynell, died in action serving with the U.S. Marine Corps in Iraq.

"Sacrifice,"  
art by Alabama artist Lori Banes  
called "Daddy's Honor"  
(in memory of her dad).





Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for civilian as well as military families — remembering those we miss, our ancestors, and even those we have not met. Just as we recommend civilians and veterans include in Memorial Day plans remembrance of

those who have contributed in defense of our country, we encourage the ritual of remembrance of those who have contributed to our families.

Added meaning can come from a remembrance, such as a moment of silence or a prayer, for those “lost” from our midst. Some individuals and families “remember” privately, while others have established annual rituals that include family reunions to not only remember and honor relationships of our past but also enjoy and nurture relationships of the present.



The Patriotism in Action wreath displayed on Memorial Day at the Alabama National Cemetery and The American Village, as well as the Raymond Weeks Monument on the eve of Veterans Day.