

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes Memorial Day as “the last Monday in May that is a national holiday in the U.S. honoring members of the armed forces who died in wars.” This is an idea that many of us remember in the back of our heads but forget to fully appreciate. The real meaning of Memorial Day is to honor those who gave up their life in order to let Americans live a life of freedom.

I began studying the topic of this paper by doing some baseline research. This task began with simple Google searches looking for a widely accepted definition of the holiday. However, I quickly noticed the overwhelming number of articles and blog posts discussing which places to travel for Memorial Day weekend. These sorts of articles made it evident to me that Memorial Day is often treated as a vacation weekend similar to spring break. This style of observance of the holiday does not fully align with the true purpose.

On Memorial Day of 2016 in Arlington, Virginia President Obama said, “For us, the living -- those of us who still have a voice -- it is our responsibility, our obligation, to fill that silence with our love and our support and our gratitude -- and not just with our words, but with our actions.” I believe that he is saying we should not only honor those who lost their lives serving, but we must be respectful towards their families as well. Also, we must do more than say that this holiday is important and that we respect our fallen soldiers. We must truly demonstrate our gratefulness through proper observance of Memorial Day.

Writing this paper has led me to wonder what I could personally do to show my gratitude towards those who gave their life for our country. I realized how much I want to truly show my respect for these American heroes. This is where I made the decision to do some more research. In this investigation, I found an incredibly helpful page on the Memorial

Day Foundation website. They had a list of things citizens can do to observe such a special holiday. These ideas included attending local memorial services, bringing flowers to memorial sites, and simply taking a moment of remembrance to think about the meaning of the day. However, the idea that stood out most to me suggested wearing a Memorial Day pin every day from May 1st until Memorial Day. This idea is great because it shows honor to fallen soldiers on more than just one day a year. Just because we have one specific day set aside for honoring these people does not mean we should forget about their work for the rest of the year.

We must all come together to remember those who up gave their lives for our nation. This is not the ideology of one political party or another, but rather this is part of being an American. The true meaning of Memorial Day is something that should be remembered throughout the entire year.

## Works Cited

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