

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Memorial Day

by Mikki Sadil

Memorial Day is a big holiday for American families. Everybody gets together for pool parties, barbeques, and all kinds of family fun. While it's wonderful to see people having fun on Memorial Day weekend, it's important to remember the real meaning of the holiday. It is a day to honor and remember all the military men and women who have died serving our country.



Memorial Day got its start after the Civil War ended, except then it was called Decoration Day. Everyone decided upon one day (at that time, it was May 30<sup>th</sup>) to go to the cemeteries and decorate the graves of Union soldiers with flowers, notes, and sometimes even handmade toys. This was in 1868.

In 1882, Decoration Day was changed to "Memorial Day" when the North and South came together to honor both Union and Confederate soldiers who had died during the Civil War. However, the US has been involved in many wars since the Civil War, so in 1967, it became the official day to honor all of the military who had died serving their country. In 1971, Memorial Day was legally changed to the last Monday in May, which is when we celebrate it now.

Do you know someone whose mother, father, brother or sister is in the military? Some servicemen are fighting overseas and won't be home for Memorial Day. How about doing something special to show support for your friends and their families who are in the military?

1. Get some of your friends together and make funny get-well cards to take to veterans in your local hospital, and maybe bake some cookies and take them along.
2. Organize your own Memorial Day Parade with your bikes and skateboards. Wear red, white, and blue clothes, and put small American flags on your handlebars or put a miniature one on your baseball cap.
3. Get your parents to teach you how to display a large American flag, and put one up in your front yard or in a stand on the garage wall.
4. Write letters to send to soldiers overseas: Tell jokes, funny stories, your dog's latest antics, anything to make a soldier laugh. They'll love you for it. You can get soldiers' names and PO addresses from a local Veteran's Administration.
5. Talk to someone who has served in the military. Ask them to tell you what it was like. Many veterans love to tell stories about their experiences.

We're lucky to live in such a free country. However, our country wouldn't be safe and free if it were not for the brave men and women who have served in the military. The purpose of Memorial Day is to remember those who have died fighting for our country, and we can also give special thanks to the men and women who serve today.

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1. When is Memorial Day?
  - a. May 30th every year
  - b. May 28th every year
  - c. on the second Monday in May
  - d. on the last Monday in May
  
2. Before 1967, Memorial Day was a special day...
  - a. to remember soldiers who died in all of our country's wars
  - b. to thank people who serve in the military
  - c. to honor soldiers who died in the American Civil War
  - d. to visit with soldiers who were injured

3. Why do we celebrate Memorial Day today?

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4. Memorial Day was once called *Decoration Day*. Why?
  - a. people would decorate their houses and yards
  - b. people would decorate the graves of Civil War soldiers
  - c. children would decorate their classrooms in school
  - d. families would watch parades together

5. What would you like to do this Memorial Day to remember and honor those who have served in the military?

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# ANSWER KEY

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  - c. **to honor soldiers who died in the American Civil War**
  - d. to visit with soldiers who were injured
  
3. Why do we celebrate Memorial Day today?  
**to honor and remember the military men and women who have served our country**
  
4. Memorial Day was once called *Decoration Day*. Why?
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5. What would you like to do this Memorial Day to remember and honor those who have served in the military?

**answers will vary**