

Staff Work

5-25-2015

Remembering Memorial Day

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Recommended Citation

Moss, L. (2015). Remembering Memorial Day. Retrieved from https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/staff_work/13

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Remembering Memorial Day

Abstract

"Every once in a while it is good to stop and to remember."

Posting about a broader perspective on Memorial Day from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/remembering-memorial-day/>

Keywords

In All Things, Memorial Day, military, death, mothers

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Remembering Memorial Day

 [all in allthings.org/remembers-memorial-day/](https://allthings.org/remembers-memorial-day/)

Liz Moss

As a high schooler, Memorial Day wasn't the typical day off from school or a vacation day that marked the start of summer. Rather, we would rise early to take the school bus to the local cemeteries near the two towns in our school district. With our musical instruments in hand and dressed in our marching band uniforms, we would line up near the edge of the crowd that gathered around the graves. We would play our country's anthem along with other songs and hymns that would blur the lines between church and state. A local minister would pray. And the names of those who had died would be read. Someone with a trumpet would hide behind a tree in the distance to play "Taps" as the older men dressed in their military uniforms would stand in a line and shoot their guns in the air. Our ears would ring as the explosive sounds would boom over the crowd. Again and again the firing would continue as the men and women stood solemnly, some saluting, to remember those who had died fighting for our country.

Flags would be placed near some of the grave sights, and flowers at others. People would walk through the cemetery, standing quietly near the stones that marked where their loved ones were placed. Then one by one they would leave and go on with the rest of their day—with planting their garden, mowing their lawn or traveling to the nearby lake.

At the time, it seemed like an odd thing to do. Memorial Day: one day out of the year when people in the community would come together in a cemetery to talk about people who had died. My cynical-self didn't understand the significance of taking an hour or two to stop and remember. And, my "not understanding how comfortable my life really is" self didn't understand the sacrifice other people have made so I can live in comfort and freedom of the country. I didn't understand the tears of the mothers who sat in the crowd on those Monday mornings, as they longed to see their lost sons or daughters again. And, I didn't understand the seriousness of the veterans who stood in the crowd, thankful they were still alive and grateful for those who had sacrificed so much on their behalf. I didn't understand what it really meant to lose someone.

And, then, someone close to me died. She was buried in the cemetery I grew up near. The cemetery we would go every Memorial Day to play our music. The place where people would gather to remember their loved ones who died before them. She never served in the military. I doubt she ever even picked up a gun. But she served people and cared for others. She was a nurse. And, she died at a young age—much younger than a mom should die.

After she died, in the midst of our grief, we went back to our lives. We were changed from our loss, but we moved forward as best as we could. We finished graduate school, got married and had her grandchildren. We settled into new homes and new jobs. We got busy. We lived life.

Every once in a while it is good to stop and to remember.

Unless you are in the midst of war, it is easy to simply live life. It is easy to be busy. It is easy to make this day like any other day. And, it is easy to not remember. The United States started [Memorial Day](#) (once known as Decoration Day) to honor military personnel who have died fighting for the country. It was actually started, originally, to remember those who died in the Civil War, after all roughly 620,000 people died in that war. Today it a day to stop and remember those who have fought and who have died in all military branches in all wars. Red poppies are worn as a symbol of remembrance. And, still today, people will gather in cemeteries around the country to decorate the graves and to sing songs deep in civil religion.

And, it is a day to stop and remember others, too—like my mom or your grandfather or your cousin.

It is a day to remember the promise of the resurrection. To look to Jesus to bring peace and wholeness and healing. And, it is a day to look for the new heaven and the new earth—where there will be no more war between nations (or in nations) and the tears of death will be gone. All disease will be vanished. And, our grief will be turned to dancing.

Come, quickly, Lord Jesus.