

ABOUT MEMORIAL DAY . . .

Do you say “Happy Memorial Day?”

No, don't wish anyone a “Happy Memorial Day.” This is not Christmas — Memorial Day was not founded in joy with the promise of bringing glee each year. It was established as a way for the country to set aside time to honor the troops who had given their lives in service to America.

In 1868, Gen. John Logan declared the day 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, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land.”

Despite what the day has transitioned to in American culture, Memorial Day was established to honor and remember America's fallen.

Don't thank the current troops

At least, don't thank them just because it's Memorial Day. They deserve respect and gratitude every day of the year, but this day is set aside specifically for America's fallen warriors from every war.

America's veterans are honored during November on Veterans Day when we aim to remember and appreciate the sacrifices of all veterans. But, Memorial Day allows the country to focus on those service members who are no longer with us, an important distinction.

Don't disregard Memorial Day's importance

Though discounts abound for nearly everything from cars to furniture to pool supplies, that's not what the holiday is about. When we focus only on the backyard barbecues or discounts on refrigerators, we allow the true meaning to become lost. Particularly when the country has perpetually been at war for the last 16 years, this isn't something we can allow to happen.

Grill some amazing steaks, and find the perfect mattress on sale, just don't forget to raise a glass in honor of those servicemen and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Don't forget Memorial Day exists

Even worse than allowing the day to become synonymous with deep discounts and potato salad is letting it slip from the public's mind completely. When Memorial Day becomes simply a highly-anticipated extra morning of sleeping in, instead of the day of reflection and appreciation it was meant to be, we disrespect our fallen troops.

Don't let politics keep you from rendering respect

Even if you don't agree with the idea of war, or the reasons America goes to war, or the policies of a particular president who was the Commander in Chief during a specific war, it doesn't matter. People have defended the people and interests of America for over 200 years and your right to disagree with the reasons for war should be separate from your opinion of the troops themselves.