



How to...

A NATION REFLECTS

The first-ever National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC, was held in 2005.



Honor Memorial Day

Remember the US service members who gave their lives for our country.

Memorial Day is a federal holiday commemorated each year on the last Monday in May. It's a special day to mourn and honor any American service member who has died. This year, Memorial Day will take place on May 25. Here are ways you can take part.

March in a parade

Traditionally, Memorial Day parades feature veterans groups and military units and may also include first responders such as firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical workers. Many towns also invite youth groups to march. If you're a scout, on a sports or dance team, or part of another youth activity, ask your leader to contact parade organizers to see if your group can be part of this year's parade. Another option is to attend a parade with your family.

Decorate a veteran's grave

If any of your relatives have died while serving in the military, your family could visit their grave and decorate it with a plant, flowers, or an American flag. If you don't have a personal connection, you can search "veterans cemetery" with your zip code to see if there's one near you. With an

adult, you can visit and follow the tradition of placing a penny on top of a veteran's gravestone to indicate that you have been there to pay your respects.

Get creative

The poppy is a symbol of sacrifice and remembrance. To make paper poppies, start by taking two red cupcake liners and pressing them flat. With scissors, cut one to be a little smaller than the other. Snip some curves on both



You can pay your respects.

liners to make petals. Use a black marker to dot the center of the small liner, then glue it on top of the large one. Color a craft stick green, and glue it to the back as a stem. If you make several poppies, you could sell them, with an adult's help, for \$1 each and donate the money to your local VFW or American Legion. Other ways to honor the day are to hang a flag, make one in chalk on your sidewalk, or draw it in crayon or marker on paper to place in a window.

Pause to pay tribute

The National Moment of Remembrance is a moment of silence that occurs at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day. No matter where you are, you can stop to remember the sacrifices of those who gave their lives to ensure our freedoms.

History of a holiday



In the final years of the Civil War (1861–1865), communities in the North and South decorated soldiers' graves with flowers on springtime "decoration days."

The first widely recognized Decoration Day observance was held on May 30, 1868, at Arlington National Cemetery and honored both Union and Confederate soldiers. After World War I (1914–1918), the day expanded to remember Americans who died in all wars, and the name "Memorial Day" became commonly used.

In the late 1960s, Congress moved Memorial Day to the last Monday in May. In 1971, it was made a federal holiday and officially renamed Memorial Day.