

"We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate - we cannot consecrate - we cannot hallow - this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Abraham Lincoln
At Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
November 19, 1863

Memorial Day

America: A Portrait in Blood

Peter Schramm writes:

- In 80 months of the Revolutionary War there were 10,623 casualties, with 4,435 deaths, or about 55 Americans dying each month of the war.
- In 37 months of the Korean War there were 136,935 casualties, with 33,651 deaths, or about 909 Americans dying in combat each month of the war.
- In 90 months of the Vietnam War there were 211,471 casualties, with 47,369 deaths, or about 526 Americans dying in combat each month of the war.
- In 1 month of the Gulf War there were 760 casualties, with 293 deaths, or 148 Americans dying in combat during the month of the war.
- In 14 months of fighting in Iraq, there have been 4,685 casualties, with 803 deaths, or 57 Americans dying each month of the war.
- These are staggering numbers. And the recriminations even during the war at home from the politicians and press were relentless, as it always seems to be in a free regime. But Americans in the field never faltered. Even after 19,000 American troops died at the Battle of the Bulge in December of 1944, or the 13,000 that died—most in hand-to-hand combat—taking Okinawa, the Americans persevered. Their courage and sacrifice knew no bounds.

Memorial Day

1. The Soldiers' blood: A record of devotion, discipline, and giving their best;

“Future years will never know the seething hell and the black infernal background of...the ...War. The real war will never get in the books.”

(Walt Whitman – writing about the Civil War)

2. As we remember their sacrifice, we are prompted to think about why the soldiers acted as they did.

"No arsenal, no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women."

Ronald Reagan

3. We are reminded as we reflect on Memorial Day, that there are some things for which to die, and to live.