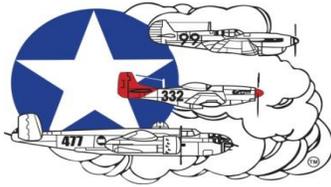


TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC.

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5/14/2018

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we prepare for the Memorial Day weekend I wanted to share with you some background on the history and meaning of Memorial Day. Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. has a unique perspective on this national holiday because of our Lonely Eagles Chapter which should cause each of us to pause and reflect on Memorial Day.

Far too many in America either don't know or choose to not remember the reason for Memorial Day. Originally called Decoration Day, it's a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. It is about reconciliation and coming together to honor those who gave their all.

Decoration Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic and was first observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

The preferred name for the holiday gradually changed from "Decoration Day" to "Memorial Day", which was first used in 1882. It did not become more common until after World War II, and was not declared the official name by Federal law until 1967. On June 28, 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Holidays Bill, which moved three holidays from their traditional dates to a specified Monday in order to create a convenient three-day weekend. The holidays included Washington's Birthday, Veterans Day and Memorial Day. The change moved Memorial Day from its traditional May 30 date to the last Monday in May. The law took effect at the federal level in 1971.

What began as a ritual of remembrance and reconciliation after the Civil War, evolved into an occasion for more general expressions of memory by the 20th Century, as ordinary people visited the graves of their deceased relatives, whether or not they had served in the military. It also became a long weekend increasingly devoted to shopping, family get-togethers, fireworks, trips to the beach, the opening of community swimming pools and national media events.

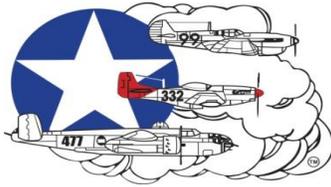
The traditional Memorial Day observance has diminished over the years. Many Americans nowadays have forgotten the meaning and traditions of Memorial Day. At some cemeteries, the graves of the fallen are increasingly ignored and neglected. Most people no longer observe the proper flag etiquette for the day. While there are towns and cities that still hold Memorial Day parades or commemorations, many have not held an observation event in decades.

Since the late 1950's, on the Thursday before Memorial Day weekend, the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) place American flags before all the gravestones and niches of service members buried at Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. Soldier's and Airmen's Home National Cemetery. They then patrol 24 hours a day during the weekend

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to ensure that each flag remains standing. In 1951, the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts of St. Louis began placing flags on the 150,000 graves at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery as an annual Good Turn, a practice that continues to this day. Beginning in 1998, on the Saturday before Memorial Day, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts place a candle at each of approximately 15,300 grave sites of soldiers buried at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. In 2004, Washington D.C. held its first Memorial Day parade in over 60 years.

To help re-educate and remind Americans of the true meaning of Memorial Day, the "National Moment of Remembrance" resolution was passed in December 2000. It calls for all Americans to "voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to "Taps" at 3:00 p.m. local time. Another tradition is to fly the United States flag at half-staff from dawn until noon local time.

We are a nation with brave men and women standing tall on the front lines in defense of our way of life. Freedom is not free and soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coast guardsmen serving on active duty, reserves, or with the National Guard, have devoted or are devoting their lives defending the American way of life.

In the words of President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: *"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."*

Sincerely,

Leon A. Johnson
National President
Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.